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No. 88. ...EW YORK, May 16, 1914. **Price Five Cents.**

From RALPH F. CUMMINGS Old Novel Exchange Bought, Sold & Exchanged Lock Box No. 8 Farmumsville, Mass.

THE STOLEN RADIUM;

Or, NICK CARTER IN THE GANGSTER'S LAIR.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS OLD NOVEL EXCHANGE Box 53 Fisherville, Mass.

CHAPTER I.

THE MISSING QUARTER MILLION.

"Is this Mr. Carter—Nick Carter himself?"

The query came in a brisk, businesslike voice over the phone, but, like most voices that addressed questions to the celebrated detective of Madison Avenue and his assistants, it had a distinctive flavor of worry.

Joseph, Nick's butler, had already called his employer to the instrument.

"Yes," was the answer, "I am Nick Carter. Who is this, please?"

"My name is Lambert—Matthew A. Lambert. I am president of the——"

"The Lambert Radium Reduction Company," Nick supplied promptly.

"Ah, you know me, then?"

"I knew of you, of course," the detective answered. "I have been very much interested for some time in radium and its possibilities, but that is unimportant. What can I do for you, Mr. Lambert?"

"I hope you can recover nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth of radium that was stolen from our New York office last night," was the startling reply.

Nick whistled softly.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated. "Have they started to steal radium already?"

"They certainly have," was Lambert's answer. "Somebody cleaned out our entire New York supply last night, which is no joke, as you may imagine, and all of us, including a couple of police headquarters detectives, are up a tree to know how the job was done. I don't know what we shall do if you can't help us, Carter. The stuff is so immensely valuable that you can have about anything you want if you can get it back and punish the criminals who robbed us. If this theft succeeds it will be the forerunner of any number of others. Every crook in the country will be aching to try his hand at the game, for, as you doubtless know, all the pure radium in the world could be carried away in a coat pocket, and not cause it to bulge much, either."

"I understand," Nick agreed sympathetically, "and I will take it up certainly. I am pretty busy already, but I have no doubt my assistants can clean up things so that I can give you all the time necessary."

"That's fine!" exclaimed Lambert. "You've taken a great load off my mind, Carter. Things ought to move now. You may find it perfectly simple, but I'll be hanged if it looks simple to us! How soon can you be here? Our offices are in the Hallbridge Building."

"You'll see me in twenty minutes."

"Good! You don't know how much those words are worth to me, Carter!"

"All right, Lambert. Count on me; and see that everything is left just as it was if the men from headquarters haven't already stirred things up."

"You needn't worry about that; there's not much left to stir up," was Lambert's bitter comment.

Chick Carter, Nick's first lieutenant, entered the detective's office just as the latter was hanging up the receiver.

"Hello, Nick!" he exclaimed. "You look as if you had your teeth in something that promised to be more than usually interesting."

"It is rather out of the ordinary," Nick answered, as he began his preparations for departure. "It's a radium robbery."

"A radium robbery!" echoed Chick. "That is something new, with a vengeance! Where—here in the city?"

Nick nodded.

This.....From
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"Ever hear of the Lambert Radium Reduction Company, with New York offices in the Hallbridge Building?" he asked.

"Why, that what's they've begun to call the 'Radium Trust,' isn't it—the biggest concern in the business?"

Again his chief gave an assenting gesture.

"That's it," he agreed. "Lambert, the president, just had me on the wire, and tells me that somebody lifted nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth of the stuff there last night."

"Great day in the morning!" ejaculated his assistant. "That was something like a haul, wasn't it?"

"The thief or thieves could not have had much trouble in carrying it away, though," Nick observed, as he put on his street coat and slipped various articles into the pockets. "Radium is being quoted, as the financial reports would say, around one hundred and twenty dollars a milligram. That means one hundred and twenty thousand dollars a gram. Roughly speaking, a French gram is about one-thirty-first of an English ounce, troy weight, or something like fifty-four million dollars a pound, in theory. As a matter of fact, of course, only a very few grams have ever been extracted, and they are scattered all over the world."

Chick pretended to be overcome, and staggered against the desk for support.

"Help!" he murmured faintly. "If you value my life, Nick, for Heaven's sake, don't fire off such figures so near my ear—and in a closed room, at that!"

Then he straightened up again, and his face resumed its usual keen look.

"According to that," he suggested, "if the Lambert people have lost anything like a quarter of a million's worth, the robbers must have got away with about two grams—a pretty fair-sized slice of the world's existing supply."

"That's easy enough to believe," Nick declared, putting on his hat and starting for the door. "They have control of an immense tract of radium lands in the Paradise Valley in Colorado, and are now the biggest producers of all. Blest if I know why they should have tried to keep such a fortune in their offices, though. It seems the height of folly, but they may have had a good reason."

"Maybe so. Want me or Patsy, chief?"

"Neither of you, yet. You boys will have to take off your coats and wade into the cases already on hand."

He paused at the office door long enough to give his right-hand man a few brief, comprehensive instructions, and then he hurried down the stairs.

Danny, his chauffeur, was waiting outside in the detective's powerful touring car, which fairly devoured the distance to the Hallbridge Building.

Nick was on time to the minute, and looked forward to the coming experience with more than his usual zest, as the express elevator shot him up to the tenth floor, on which the radium company's offices were located.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE SCENE.

The president of the company had evidently been awaiting the detective's coming with much impatience, for he was already in the anteroom.

He came forward at once when Nick gave his name. He was a short, plump, rosy man of fifty or so, with prematurely white hair, but the very embodiment of energy.

"Ah, Mr. Carter, you are prompt, I see!" he said heartily, holding out his hand. "I am Lambert. Come right in, and I'll show you what those scoundrels have done."

He bustled ahead of Carter into a handsomely furnished inner office, the massive mahogany furnishings of which were in striking contrast to the scene of ruin and violation that presented itself at the same time.

A small, built-in wall safe of the most modern construction had evidently been the chief object to which the thieves had devoted their attention. In fact, nothing else seemed to have been disturbed to the slightest extent, not even the larger and more massive detached safe which stood in one corner of the room.

Damage enough had been done to the smaller receptacle, however, to make up for that neglect.

Nick's first glance showed it to have been ripped open, very much as if some huge can opener, in the hands of a giant of skyscraper proportions, had bitten into it, and plowed through its specially hardened steel as easily as through a sheet of tin.

"Ah, they treated it to the oxyhydrogen process, I see!" Carter remarked, as he caught sight of the damage done, and the strewed contents of the rifled safe which littered the floor in front of it.

Not until then did he pay any attention to the two tall, heavily built men who had been prowling about the room at their entrance. These men had turned as the door was opened, and waited expectantly.

Now, one of them caught Nick's eye, and advanced.

"Morning, Nick!" he said, with the easy informality of old acquaintanceship. "This is one of the times when I'm mighty glad to see you come in on us in this fashion. I confess that Reyburn and I haven't got this thing by the tail yet."

"Hello, Drake! How's your soul, Reyburn?" Nick greeted the two plain-clothes men from headquarters in turn. "Up against it?"

"So far," Reyburn agreed ruefully. "I don't believe you will clean this up in twenty-four hours, Carter."

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"Maybe not," he said. "I believe in quick deliveries, but they're not the whole thing, by any means."

"Well, if you can give Lambert here a 'quick delivery' in connection with this little affair, we'll have to hand it to you, that's all," declared Drake. "You're right, of course, in saying that an oxyhydrogen apparatus has been used on that safe, but how in thunder could a thing like that have been smuggled in and out? It wasn't any vest-pocket outfit that did that job, and a regular apparatus of that sort, as you know, is big and bulky. It must weigh a hundred pounds, or more, with those two tanks for the compressed gases and all the rest of it. It would have had to be brought here and carried away again in a wagon. That's unlikely enough, but when you stop to think that it would have had to be lugged up ten flights of stairs, or else brought up and carried down in the elevator, you have begun to see what sort of a proposition you have to tackle. Either the superintendent of the building and all of his understrappers are mixed up in this thing, or else——"

He paused, and threw out his hands helplessly.

"There you are!" he went on, after a moment. "Looks simple, doesn't it?"

"Not very," the great detective agreed, with a smile, "but such little puzzles usually prove simple enough before you

have dug into them very far. Let's get down to brass tacks, though," he added, turning to Lambert. "In the first place, I am curious to know why you were keeping so much radium here in your offices. Surely you ought to be able to find some safer place for it. What's the matter with the big safe-deposit companies?"

"Nothing, except that they won't let us keep it there," was the disgusted response.

"Won't let you?"

"Exactly that. It's a new proposition to them, you see, and they have side-stepped it so far. They've heard so much about radium emanations doing all sorts of destructive stunts, that they seem to be afraid a gram or so of it will eat up their vaults, or put their protective wiring out of business, or something of that sort. Anyway, we haven't been able to make them stand for it as yet, even though we've tried to convince them again and again that we can incase our tubes of radium in thick receptacles of lead, and thereby practically cut off all action on surrounding objects. The upshot of it is, however, that we've been obliged to store the stuff ourselves, both here and in our plants at Paradise, Colorado."

"In specially constructed safes?"

"Certainly. Ordinary ones, even the best of them, wouldn't do at all. We had ours made in accordance with our own designs, with an inner skin of zinc three inches thick, and some ingenious contrivances to prevent any waste of the emanations when they were opened."

"That is interesting, but unimportant from the standpoint of a skilled safe breaker," declared Nick. "You doubtless believed you had a safe you could keep radium in, unless it was helped out, but you see it *was* helped out last night."

"It certainly was."

"And without much trouble," Nick went on. The smallness of the safe, and the proportionate thinness of the steel outer walls made it considerably easier, of course, but no other safe made would have stood up much longer against the terrific heat of an oxyhydrogen blast. The fatal mistake was in storing radium in a safe at all, but, from what you tell me, that cannot be helped. By the way, was anything else disturbed? I see that your regular safe appears to be intact."

"It is absolutely intact inside and out, Carter. They were only after our radium, and I must say that they got what they went gunning for!"

Nick approached the violated safe, glanced carelessly at its gaping, circular door, and briefly noted the effects of the intense heat that had melted the steel like so much lead, and had cut through the three inches of lead within as if they had been butter.

"The radium was in platinum tubes, I suppose?" Nick queried. "How many of them?"

"Two—a gram in each; and each, worse luck, was worth about one hundred and twenty thousand dollars of any one's good money!"

"How big were they?"

"Oh, about the size of a small vial—about three inches long and half an inch in diameter."

"Incased in anything?"

"No. The lead lining of the safe served that purpose."

Nick gave a slight start as if he had just thought of something.

"By George!" he ejaculated, a moment later. "If the fellows who took that don't know what they're up against, it may not be very hard to catch them!"

Lambert nodded understandingly, but the two police detectives looked distinctly puzzled.

"What do you mean?" asked Drake.

"Simply this—if they don't know enough to protect themselves against the terrific bombardment occasioned by the constant giving off of the various kinds of radium rays, and try to carry the stuff anywhere on their persons, they'll have some sores that it may take months to heal."

Reyburn shivered.

"Is that what the beastly stuff does?" he demanded.

"That is exactly what it does when it is handled ignorantly," spoke up the president of the company.

"If that's the case, then, these crooks may be up against it for fair," remarked Drake. "They've probably heard about the immense value of a pinch of radium, and thought it would be a cinch to carry off a fortune in their vest pockets without having any idea that it was any more dangerous to handle than a pill box full of uncut diamonds. Maybe we'll catch them that way!"

"Look for some fellows that have just been laid up with some running sores?" queried Reyburn, with a grin.

"It might not be a bad idea," declared Nick. "Just now, though, we've got to find out how this job was done."

CHAPTER III.

THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY.

"Well, we're ready to be shown, Nick," declared Drake, with a slight smile at his fellow plain-clothes man.

"I suppose so," said the detective. "You have had the superintendent of the building on the grill, of course?"

"Sure thing—right at the start," was the prompt answer.

"Couldn't he throw any light on it?"

"Not a single candle power."

"How about the men under him?"

"We had them up on the carpet, too, but they all swore that they didn't know a thing about it, and the funny part of it is that they made a noise like telling the truth, Carter."

"You didn't detect anything queer about any of them, then?"

"Not a thing. Maybe *you* could catch some of them napping, but I doubt it. Shall we have them paraded for your benefit again?"

"Not now—later on, perhaps," replied Nick. "If they passed muster with you fellows I am willing to let it go at that for a while, and see if I can't find some other explanation."

"But what other explanation can there be?" Lambert spoke up, in the utmost bewilderment. "I know something about the oxyhydrogen process, and what these men say is true. It would have been impossible for any such apparatus to have been brought into the building and all the way up here to the tenth floor without connivance on the part of one or more of the employees of the building. The thing is preposterous on the face of it."

"So it would appear—in the way you mean," agreed Nick. "Don't be so fast, though! There are more ways than one of playing such a game."

"I don't see what you're driving at," objected the president of the company.

"Probably not," returned Nick, with a slight smile. "I hope we shall all have a little more light on the subject soon, though. Who was the first one down this morning?"

"I was, as it happened," Lambert answered. "Our chief clerk usually gets down about fifteen minutes ahead of me, but I beat him this morning."

"Then you opened up the offices, and were the first to discover that a robbery had taken place?"

"Yes."

"Things were substantially as they are now?"

"Yes. Nothing of importance has been changed."

"Doors and windows as usual?"

"Just as usual. The entrance door was locked, and apparently had not been tampered with. I made the rounds at once, and found the other doors opening from the suite into the corridor fastened as they always are. We only use the one. The windows were all locked, too."

"Now, will you be good, Carter?" queried Drake. "You have got something on your mind, I can see, but I'm afraid you'll have to forget it. I hope you're not going to suggest that the spirits smuggled an oxyhydrogen apparatus in and out of this room without using the stairs or the elevator. Maybe you think it was dropped down from the roof with a block and tackle, and shunted in through a locked window?"

"Hardly that," said Nick, with a smile. "I still insist there are other ways, though, of turning such a trick."

The two men from headquarters looked at each other significantly, as if they thought Nick was out of his depth for once, and merely bluffing.

Their famous coworker, however, had already evolved a theory that had been untouched by any of the objections thus far offered, and that would adequately explain the mysterious theft, but it remained to be seen whether it would stand up in the face of a further investigation.

Certainly appearances were against it in many respects, but Nick had never been one to judge by appearances. That sort of thing doesn't pay in the detective business.

Carter was inclined to agree with the two police detectives that those in charge of the building at night were not involved in any way. Such persons are trustworthy, as a rule, and, though scamps are frequently found among them, it was not likely that more than one connected with the Hallbridge Building were of that character, if any. On the other hand, it would seem that the whole night force would have had to be crooked in order to allow such a thing to go on.

That was almost unbelievable, and if it were assumed that they were straight, then it seemed equally evident that the oxyhydrogen apparatus that had been used to open the safe had not been introduced into or removed from the radium company's offices in any ordinary way.

Then, what extraordinary method had been used? Drake and Reyburn had thrown up their hands, figuratively speaking, when it came to answering that question, but Nick Carter had no intention of following their example, baffling as the puzzle seemed to be.

Having dismissed, for the time being, the theory that the superintendent of the building, or any of those under him, had been implicated, it naturally followed that the apparatus had not been brought in from the corridor, for it could not have been transported to the tenth floor, and trundled along the corridor, without coming under the eye of some of those whose duty it was to guard the big building after dark.

The windows at that height were equally out of the question.

All that remained, therefore, were the walls and partitions of the suite, together with the floors and ceilings of the various rooms.

And none of them showed apparently the slightest sign that they had been tampered with—certainly nothing in the nature of a hole that would have admitted the passage of any bulky object.

Under the circumstances, it was not surprising that Drake and Reyburn had found themselves all at sea, or that they should now be exchanging glances behind Nick's back in anticipation of his discomfiture.

It certainly looked to the average mind that if there was ever a mystery that was incapable of solution, it was this. And yet Nick Carter smiled quietly, and went about his business as if it were all an everyday matter.

His first act was to examine the floor of the room in which the safe had been opened. That was easy enough to understand. He was obviously looking for any marks that might indicate where the apparatus had been dragged along, either on its own bottom, or on wheels of some sort. If he could find any telltale vestiges of that sort he would doubtless get a clew to the point at which the apparatus had entered the room.

But, strangely enough, he found absolutely nothing of that character, either on the bare hard-wood floor, with its polished, easily scratched surface, or in the nap of the thick velvet rug that occupied the center of the room.

In the other rooms of the suite there was a similar surprising absence of such marks. The fact might well have seemed almost uncanny to an ordinary mind, in view of the heavy nature of the contrivance that must have been trundled over one of the floors, at least, in one way or another.

To Nick, however, it was merely another evidence of the cleverness of the robbers, but one that did not daunt him in the slightest degree. It simply showed that they had resorted to some ingenious contrivance designed to leave no trace, and he realized immediately that a small rubber-tired hand truck would easily have served the purpose.

The floors having told him nothing, he turned his attention to the walls. These were finished with plaster board, instead of the ordinary lath and plaster. Plaster board, as the reader doubtless knows, is a comparatively new product that comes in large sheets an inch or so thick, which are nailed direct to the studding. After that the seams left are covered with ornamental strips of hard wood, giving a paneled effect to walls and ceiling. The plaster board usually has a pebbled surface, which can be tinted any color desired.

Nick's theory would have been out of the question in the case of any room that was plastered in the ordinary way, but it was quite possible in this particular instance. The great detective immediately began to make the circuit of the walls in the room in which the safe had been entered. His keen eyes detected nothing at one side of the room, and he passed on to the wall at right angles, while the others watched him intently.

The early summer light was streaming brightly into the windows, and with its aid he quickly saw that one large panel of the plaster board was slightly different in tint from the rest.

A quick step forward and a closer glance revealed the further fact that the strips of wood at either side of this panel had recently been carefully pried away and then replaced.

That was enough for him.

"Here is the key to your mystery, gentlemen," he said quietly, stepping back. "Will you kindly phone for the superintendent of the building, Mr. Lambert, and tell him to bring his master key, a hammer, and a chisel?"

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE PLASTER BOARD CONCEALED.

Nick's air of confidence, and the swiftness with which he had reached the conclusion indicated, were alike amazing to his hearers.

Lambert paused in bewilderment before obeying the detective's request.

"What—what have you discovered?" he asked, in open-mouthed astonishment, while the two headquarters men pressed forward to Nick's side and scanned the wall with almost ludicrous eagerness.

"It's as simple as rolling off a log," was the cool response. "The robbers have merely taken advantage of the presence of this plaster board to conceal the fact that they brought in the oxyhydrogen apparatus through this way from the adjoining suite."

"What makes you think so?" demanded Burke, examining the horizontal strips of wood. "Ah, I see! These moldings have been tampered with. That doesn't prove anything, though."

"Doesn't it?" queried Nick. "Perhaps the fact that that panel doesn't match the others in color will be a little more convincing. How long have you occupied these rooms, Mr. Lambert?"

"Ever since the building was opened, two years ago."

"Have you ever had any repairs made to these walls?"

"Never."

"Then I think that settles it. Will you ring for the superintendent, or shall I?"

"But still I don't see," muttered Reyburn. "How did they get the apparatus into the adjoining suite?"

"How did they get the furniture into it?" retorted Nick.

"But that's different," objected Drake. "You don't mean to imply, do you, that the tenants themselves——"

"That is exactly what I do imply," was the answer. "It has been clear to me from the first that if the superintendent and his men were not accomplices to this thing, the apparatus must have been consigned to one of the tenants on this floor, and brought here boxed as office furniture, or something of the sort. The adjoining suite on this side naturally fell under suspicion first because it was nearest to this room, consequently the oxyhydrogen outfit would have had to be transported a shorter distance, and would not need to be taken out into the hall at all. Thus the greatest danger of detection would be avoided. I don't know anything about the occupants of the next suite or their ostensible business, but I'll wager anything that the latter, whatever it is, is merely a blind, and that the rooms haven't been occupied long—also that they are not occupied to-day."

"But the apparatus?"

"Will doubtless be found next door. Ah, here comes the man we want!"

The superintendent of the building, a short, stocky, light-haired Swede, entered at that moment, armed with the tools he had been requested to bring.

"Nelson, this is Nick Carter, the famous detective," was Lambert's informal introduction. "He says those scoundrels gained entrance through the partition there between this room and the adjoining one of the next suite."

The superintendent looked at the place pointed out, and an incredulous expression crossed his face.

"How can that be?" he asked, with hardly a trace of accent.

Nick smiled disarmingly.

"I'll soon show you," he said, taking the hammer and chisel from the superintendent's unresisting hands.

With these he went deftly to work, and had soon removed the strips of wood inclosing the panel which had aroused his suspicions. The plaster board itself could not be removed without defacing it, and he therefore attacked it ruthlessly.

He soon had the whole section ripped away from the timbers to which it had been nailed. The others had crowded about him during the process, edging as close as they could without interfering with his work. Now a simultaneous gasp of amazement arose from them as they saw what lay beyond.

The adjoining suite was also finished with plaster board, and the section corresponding to that which Nick had just removed was found to be absent.

The unobstructed view of the next room which was thus obtained revealed the accuracy of Nick Carter's deductions. The litter of broken plaster board covered the floor just beyond the hole, and a little farther off, near the center of the room, stood the telltale object of their search—the clumsy oxyhydrogen apparatus standing on a little rubber-tired truck.

"For Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Lambert. "I wouldn't have believed it! So that's how it was done, eh?"

"Exactly," replied Nick. "Somebody who was in the game must have visited your offices on some pretext or other, and learned the tint that had been used on your walls. The same size and kind of plaster board was doubtless used on the next suite, and it was easy enough for them to obtain a strip of it and give it a coat of paint that was near enough to yours in color to deceive any ordinary inspection. The rest was like stealing pennies from a blind man. The suite was unquestionably hired for this one purpose, and the apparatus has probably been in there, still in its crate, for some little time, awaiting the chosen night. Last night all that was left to do was to break through the walls, trundle the apparatus in here, rip open the safe, and then wheel it back. After that they swept all the rubbish into their own room, and I must say they made a splendid job of it. Their previously prepared panel was then nailed into place, and the strips restored, after which they simply unlocked your door with a duplicate key, passed out into the corridor, locked it up again while nobody was about, and retreated to their own rooms. As I foresaw, there is nobody in evidence to-day, and you may be sure there won't be—the birds have flown."

"Well, I guess we'll have to hand it to you on a silver plate, Nick," declared Detective Drake. "That was about the slickest piece of work I've seen for some time."

"The job looks rather raw and unfinished in that other room, but they were counting on its not being dis-

covered for some days. They certainly covered their tracks in here well enough to leave us up in the air, and I'm afraid we would have stayed there if you hadn't come along and put us wise."

"Wouldn't that jolt you!" ejaculated the superintendent of the building, getting his breath at last. "Who'd ever have thought that fellow was a crook!"

"What fellow?" Reyburn demanded quickly. "That's what we want to get at. Who hired these rooms, and when?"

"They were taken about two weeks ago," was the answer. "A man by the name of James Grannan—that's what he called himself, anyway—rented them. He called himself an agent for some motion-picture producers over in England."

"Was anybody in with him?" asked Nick.

"Nobody that I know about. He just had a young girl stenographer—that was all. She probably wasn't on to the game at all. I guess he thought he had to have her to make a noise like doing business, and this job, of course, was pulled off when she wasn't on duty."

"Let's have a look at the rooms," suggested Carter. "Don't bother about your key, Nelson; we can crawl through this hole."

They did so, Nick leading, and they found that the rooms of the suite, with the exception of the main one, were very scantily furnished indeed—just enough to give the desired impression.

On the ground glass of the main door appeared a sign, which Nick easily spelled out from behind. It read: "Transatlantic Film Exchange. James Grannan, New York Representative."

"Wonder why the girl isn't down to-day if she wasn't in the fellow's confidence," speculated Drake.

"Oh, he probably told her not to come down this morning on some pretext or other," replied Nick, "or more than likely he discharged her last night. You keep an eye out for her, Nelson, in case she turns up later. Maybe she can give us a line on this Grannan, but I think we can safely leave her out of consideration in any other way."

Carter had hoped to find some additional clews in the deserted suite, but met with nothing but disappointment in that respect, save for one thing:

The oxyhydrogen apparatus bore the name of its maker, a New York firm, and was apparently brand new. That might lead to something, even if it had been obtained in a roundabout way.

The tools with which the breach in the wall had been made were also in evidence, but the desk and file cases were empty, and there was not a scrap of paper anywhere, even in the wastebasket.

"Tell us about this Grannan. What did he look like, Nelson?" questioned Nick, turning to the superintendent.

"Why, he was a short, thickset fellow about my height and build, I should say," was the answer. "He certainly didn't look like a crook, Mr. Carter. He was always mighty well dressed, but his clothes had a sort of different cut. Maybe they were English, but I couldn't say about that. He had sandy hair, and one of them little mustaches that's chopped off short like a docked horse's tail."

"Eyes?"

"Light, sir—sort of blue or gray, I guess."

"Anything peculiar about his face—high cheek bones, protruding ears, scars, or anything like that?"

"No, sir; I don't remember anything of the sort, but there was one funny thing about him."

"What was that?" broke in Drake.

"Why, I guess he had a touch of St. Vitus' dance, or something like that. Anyway, his face twitched now and then. It wasn't so very noticeable, and it didn't happen very often, but I spotted it the first time I talked to him."

"Ah, that is a valuable point," commented Nick. "That ought to help a lot. Did he give any recommendations when he rented the rooms?"

"You'll have to ask the agents about that; I couldn't say," was the answer. "The only thing I know was that somebody else had the refusal of this suite, and had paid a deposit on it; then this Grannan comes along and wanted it. He got it somehow or another—probably made a deal with the fellow who had the option."

"I see," murmured Nick. "It might be a good idea to look into that. It is possible that the other man knows more than he would like to admit."

"That's no joke, either!" agreed Reyburn. "The other guy may have been holding the rooms until this one was ready to step up and put the deal through, or he may not have wanted to appear directly in the affair himself."

"That's quite conceivable," Nick responded with a nod. "Anyway, we have made substantial progress, Lambert," Nick continued, turning to the president of the radium company; "and I hope things will continue to move at a good pace."

"You have certainly done wonders, Carter," declared Lambert, with the utmost heartiness. "All this looks easy enough, now, but I don't believe anybody but you would have thought of it. If you round up this man Grannan and his pals you can name your price."

"I am not worrying about the price, Lambert," was the answer. "That is always a secondary consideration with me. I sometimes feel almost as if I ought to pay my clients for giving me an opportunity of getting so much entertainment out of life.

"How about it, boys?" he went on, facing the two police detectives. "Are you going on with this case?"

"What's the use?" Drake returned. "We had our chance and fell down. Now, if we butt in on the rest of it we may queer your game for you. No, you just toddle along and set Chick and Patsy to work on it. There's plenty more for us to do, and when headquarters hears that you are on the job we'll get another assignment fast enough."

"Thanks. That's just what I'll do, then," answered Carter. "Chick and Patsy shall be turned loose, and I hope we'll get results before long."

CHAPTER V.

A WARM SCENT.

The description of Grannan given by the Swedish superintendent of the Hallbridge Building had left Nick something to think about.

The name borne by the supposed motion-picture agent was, of course, an assumed one, and his general description was of no particular interest to the great detective. His build, however, taken in connection with the nervous twitching of the face referred to by Nelson was an important point.

It gave Carter a possible clew. It might be, of course, that the facial twitching had been resorted to intentionally as a part of the disguise the man had unquestionably

worn. Crooks had gone to greater and cleverer lengths than that in Nick's long experience. In that case the clew was no clew at all.

Yet Nick hoped better of it than that, and had made up his mind at once to look up the man it recalled to mind.

Before doing so, however, it would be well to take up the line of investigation suggested by the maker's name and address stamped on the oxyhydrogen apparatus.

Nick had Danny drive him back to his house, where he found Chick waiting for him.

"Here is where you bestir yourself a little so you won't get stale, my boy," was the way he greeted his assistant.

Chick grinned.

"Small likelihood of that, I imagine," he answered. "You'll find me a willing old Dobbin, though. What's the stunt?"

His chief thereupon briefly outlined the case, and put him in possession of all the necessary information, closing with the name of the concern which had manufactured the apparatus used. It was located on West Broadway.

"They're above suspicion, of course," he added, "but it is barely possible that the apparatus was obtained there at firsthand by this Grannan chap, ostensibly for a legitimate, commercial purpose. If that turns out to be correct, we shall get an independent description of the fellow. If not, maybe we can implicate somebody else in addition to him. The number of the apparatus was also stamped on it—Series A, No. 8410. They will be able to identify it from that. Get all the facts in regard to its sale, when it took place, and the rest. If the sale occurred some time ago, the chances are that it has passed through more than one set of hands. Get a description of the purchaser, anyway, and any addresses given. Then use your own judgment. If you think it likely that the man who bought them had no criminal intent, hunt him up if possible, and find out what became of the apparatus after it passed out of his hands. Keep on following it up in that way if necessary, but by all means stop short before questioning any one who may have reason to take the alarm."

"I understand, chief," Chick declared, and took his departure almost immediately afterward.

The detective then called in Patsy Garvan, his second assistant, and gave that young man some further instructions which led him to make a visit to the Bowery.

It was just a scouting expedition in the nature of a preliminary survey, for Nick was not prepared to act decisively until he heard from Chick. He desired to locate the man he had in mind, however, so that if further evidence continued to point in his direction, he could be found without loss of time when Carter was ready to act.

Chick reported sooner than Nick had expected.

It was barely an hour before he was back at the detective's house on Madison Avenue.

"Give me something hard next time," he said, as he entered Nick's study.

"You found it easy, then?"

"As soft as butter, so far as it went. The fellow didn't cover his trail very well there, I must say. He probably used up most of his gray matter in planning that now-you-see-it-and-now-you-don't act at the Hallbridge Building."

"Grannan bought the apparatus himself, then?"

"Not under that name. They gave me a different description, too, but the build was the same, and so were the twitching features. It looks as if something else might drop, too, unless we round him up in pretty short order."

"How's that?"

"He bought two complete oxyhydrogen outfits instead of one."

Nick was unprepared for that information, and he showed it.

"The dickens, you say!" he ejaculated. "Where was the other one sent?"

"That's where we are up against it," was the answer. "They couldn't tell me a thing about that."

"Why not?"

"Simply because 'Grannan' was a little too bright for us in that respect. The name he gave them was a fictitious one, although they didn't know it until I called up the address given and found that no such person was known there. They had no instructions to send the outfits anywhere. 'Grannan' told them he would have one of his own wagons call for them. A dray did so the next day, and carried them off, after showing a written order signed with the name the fellow had given them; but there was no name on the dray, and they had no means of identifying it."

"I see," murmured Nick, drumming thoughtfully on his desk. "They didn't know, then, that one of the outfits was destined for the Hallbridge Building?"

"Not at all. 'Grannan' told them some yarn about representing a new wrecking company that had received a contract to tear down some old buildings in which steel construction had been used. He said the oxyhydrogen apparatus was wanted to cut up the steel."

"His little fairy tale was well conceived," remarked Nick. "They fell for it, of course, and never suspected for a moment that their product was to be used in any other way?"

"There's no doubt about that," agreed his assistant. "They went right up in the air when I told them what had happened, and I don't believe they've come down yet."

Nick had previously revealed his suspicions, such as they were, to Chick, and consequently the latter went on:

"It certainly looks as if it wouldn't be a waste of time to corner 'Jumpy' Riley, and make him account for his whereabouts last night, and the last couple of weeks or so. The descriptions we have would fit him all right, but if he's responsible for this job, I should say he must have had somebody behind him to furnish a good part of the brains. Riley is certainly no slouch as a cracksman, and he pulled off some pretty big jobs before we sent him up the river four years ago, but he's been lying pretty low since his release. He never tackled anything like this, though, in his palmiest days."

"That's true," admitted Nick. "The safe-breaking part of it would be quite in his line, of course, but the rest—the disguise, the hiring of that suite, the complete concealment of the means employed, and all that—were hardly to be expected of him. Riley is no fool, though, and he had a pretty fair education, if I remember rightly. He might have done it all with good coaching. However, I am by no means sure he did it. As I said before, the nervous twitching of the face is the only apparent clew that's worth anything, and we may find it a wrong scent. Patsy is down on the Bowery in disguise, nosing around Jumpy's usual stamping grounds after a little advance

information. I will wait to hear from him before making a move."

Half an hour later young Garvan put in an appearance. He was minus his disguise, having shed that at some neutral point best known to himself before returning to the house.

"It looks as if your hunch might be right, chief," he announced, his eyes snapping.

"What have you learned?" asked Nick.

"I found out that Jumpy has been unaccountably absent from his usual haunts every day for the last two weeks or so. His cronies don't seem to know what to make of it, for Riley's working hours have usually been at night, which is natural enough considering his occupation of self-appointed inspector of safes. Last night, though, he was a little more normal. He wasn't in evidence most of the night."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Absolutely."

"How?"

Patsy told him.

"Good work!" Nick exclaimed, when he heard the ruse by which his young assistant had gained the information desired. "It begins to look as if my guess had not been so far off, after all. There may have been somebody behind Riley, as Chick suggests, but it looks as if Jumpy did the job itself, single-handed."

Chick nodded.

"That's right," he agreed. "The fact of his having been unaccounted for every day lately looks like pretty good evidence. He was likely playing the part of Grannan at such times. We seem to be getting along swimmingly, but it's about time now to look for breakers ahead."

"I'm afraid you are right there," admitted Nick. "It is one thing to suspect a man like Jumpy Riley, even on the best of grounds, and quite another to land him in the Tombs and see that he is convicted. I heard a while ago that he had joined the Tim Kelly Association since his release, and that means that we shall have our hands full."

"Gee, that's the truth down to the ground!" contributed Patsy. "We haven't had any knockdowns and drag-outs with the Tim Kellys for some time. But they don't love us very much, and you can be sure they'll give us a warm reception if we try to lay our hands on Jumpy. He's hanging out at their clubrooms this afternoon, or was, at last accounts. That spells trouble with a capital T."

"Let it!" Nick remarked carelessly. "I shall be glad of the chance to get a little better line on those fellows. They've managed to keep under cover remarkably well, but their association is rotten from top to bottom, and if I can involve some of the rest of them besides Riley, so much the better. I hope they will pitch in and help him—as many as possible of them."

Chick looked serious.

"That's all very well, chief," he said, "and you can count on us to jump in and help you, but don't forget that something may happen to you while the fun is in progress."

The detective smiled grimly.

"I don't doubt it," he said, "but I hope to be able to keep the breath in my body, nevertheless. I have never lost it yet for very long at a time, and I don't believe that the Tim Kelly Association can permanently deprive me of it."

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE GANGSTER'S LAIR.

The association referred to was one of many similar organizations on the East Side—an incorporated club with rooms over a saloon on the Bowery. It took its name from a notorious ward politician, who was its president, and had been formed ostensibly for political and social purposes. It was generally believed, however, to be made up to a considerable extent of saloon keepers, bartenders, gangsters, gunmen, and others interested in even less reputable pursuits.

The very fact that Jumpy Riley had recently joined the ranks of the Tim Kellys indicated that he had very powerful backing, and could count, not only on the characteristic assistance of a number of dangerous gunmen, but also on that sort of questionable political influence which is still powerful in New York in spite of all the city's efforts at reform.

The one kind of backing could be counted on to defend Jumpy ruthlessly before his arrest, and the latter might easily get him off after his capture.

All in all it was not a promising outlook for the detectives. In fact, it bristled with all sorts of possibilities in the way of danger.

Yet Nick prepared to meet the situation as calmly as if he were going to a tango tea.

It would have simplified matters not a little if he could have been absolutely sure of Jumpy Riley's guilt in connection with the great radium robbery, but that was not the case. He was obliged to go on insufficient evidence, but he determined to act boldly, nevertheless.

He had found that boldness was the best weapon to use with men of Jumpy's stamp, and that of the latter's associates. He therefore made up his mind to hunt up the notorious cracksman without the slightest attempt at concealment—in fact, to penetrate to the stronghold of the Tim Kelly Association without a disguise, and there to confront Jumpy, and denounce him as the man who had robbed the Lambert Radium Reduction Company the night before. Such an act would certainly be in the nature of a colossal bluff, but it was the quickest way to get to the heart of the matter. Nick was confident that he could tell from Riley's manner whether the stocky little cracksman had really done the job or not.

If it turned out that he had not, there would be no great harm done, unless Jumpy and his fellow club members should take violent objection to the false charge. In that case there might be a lively scrimmage on the Bowery, but Nick was always prepared for such emergencies.

Then, if he failed to fasten the crime on Riley, and succeeded in getting away from the scene of hostilities with a reasonably whole skin, he would at once be free to turn his attention elsewhere without any unnecessary loss of time. His one promising clew would have been proved to be worthless, and he would have to look further for the man with the twitching face.

If, on the other hand, Jumpy's behavior under fire should betray his guilt, Nick would be ready to take advantage of that circumstance.

His instructions to his assistants were brief, but to the point.

"I am going to the Tim Kelly Association rooms just as I am," he said, "but with a miscellaneous assortment

of weapons about me, and a few steel bracelets. If Jumpy isn't there when I reach the place I am going to hunt him up wherever he is. I want you to shadow me in disguise, and as soon as I enter the clubrooms Chick is to take his stand where he can watch the front exit, and you, Patsy, are to sneak around to the alley and stand guard at the rear. Keep as inconspicuous as you can. Jumpy may manage to give me the slip, and I want you boys to be ready to take up the trail."

"That's all clever enough!" declared Chick, "but suppose you find him, accuse him of the crime, and find the whole gang trying to jump down your throat at once."

"Let's hope I can cough them up if they do," was the dry response. "No, if I find Jumpy, as I expect to, and his reception of me satisfies me that he is the man I want, I shall blow my police whistle as a signal to you, and you, Chick, must blow yours to summon assistance. They may not hear mine, coming from the building, as it will, or be unable to locate it quickly."

"And meanwhile you may find yourself full of little pellets of lead," objected Patsy. "Why not tip the police off ahead of time and have a few of them on hand—or better still, some plain-clothes men—so that they and we can jump right in at the first sound?"

"You forget, Patsy, that that would be contrary to our usual rule. I can't do it consistently, and I don't want to do it for the very good reason that I am not yet sure that Jumpy and Grannan are one. Consequently, I don't want to bring the police here unnecessarily, or on any false errand. That wouldn't do at all. I only summon the police when I need them, and am absolutely sure of my man; not otherwise."

Chick made a helpless, half-humorous gesture.

"There's no use in trying to argue him out of his obstinacy, Patsy," he said. "Nick has obviously set his heart on walking into that nest of gangsters, and pulling his chestnut out of the fire with his bare hands—or trying to. All we can do is to stand by to lower boats as soon as we hear the distress signal."

They immediately separated, and the assistants went to their rooms to don their disguises. Nick gave them time to do so, and then, having ordered his car around, stepped into it and gave his chauffeur the address of the Tim Kelly Association rooms, near Delancey Street.

"Got your little pepper shaker with you, Danny?" he asked, pausing for a moment on the running board.

Danny half exposed the butt of an automatic.

"This old friend of mine is right on the job, chief," he answered.

"That's right! You might jump out and follow Chick when you hear a police whistle from inside the place to which we are going. He will be in disguise, but you won't probably have any difficulty in recognizing him. You know most of his get-ups already. An extra pair of hands may come in handy!"

Danny's eyes glistened.

"I've been aching for a fight this long time,' he said, with amusing eagerness. "I hope you will need me."

"I think it quite likely," Nick observed quietly.

The detective had given his assistants a little start, and they had taken one of his other motor cars, with one of them at the wheel. They left it a block or so from the clubrooms, continuing on foot, and quickly posting themselves as Nick had directed.

Nick arrived almost immediately, his big car stopping directly in front of the association rooms. That in itself was enough to attract attention in that neighborhood, for such machines did not ordinarily draw up to the curb in front of a saloon as notorious as that kept by Mike Boylan, which occupied the ground floor of the three-story building.

Nick got out slowly. Contrary to his usual custom, he was anxious to attract as much attention as he could. The loungers in front of Boylan's place stared at him, and nudged one another. It was obvious that some of them, at least, recognized him, which was just what the detective desired.

He knew that he was running a risk in entering the place in that fashion, but he wished to have his presence there known, in the hope that the publicity of his arrival might deter the gangsters in the club from resorting to extreme measures.

When he had made the desired impression, he boldly entered the narrow hallway to the left of the saloon, and climbed the stairs. At the top of the first flight he threw open the door of the clubrooms without the slightest hesitation, and strode in as if quite at home there.

He found himself in a sort of reading room, furnished with chairs, a couple of long tables, and numerous cuspidors. The walls were almost covered with highly colored and highly spiced beer and whisky signs, pictures of prize fighters, chorus girls, race horses, and the like.

The tables were strewn with copies of newspapers, most of them opened to the sporting pages.

There were several furtive-eyed individuals sitting around the tables, while others had gathered in a knot in one corner, their chairs tipped back against the wall.

As luck would have it, one of these latter proved to be Jumpy Riley, the front legs of whose chair came down to the floor with suspicious haste as he caught sight of the detective.

"Hello, boys! Do you know me?" Nick greeted them with bluff familiarity, walking over to Jumpy's corner. "If you don't, I am Nick Carter. I see that Jumpy recognizes me, which is fortunate, for I have come to have a little talk with him."

The introduction was unnecessary so far as most of those present were concerned, but Nick's breezy, informal entrance took them by surprise, and set them to guessing, as he had meant it to do.

Riley, however, was open-mouthed and scowling.

"What in thunder are you doing here, and what do you want of me?" he growled, getting up defensively.

"Don't trouble to rise, Jumpy," Nick said, in his politest drawing-room manner. "I just dropped in to congratulate you on that job you pulled off last night. You quite outdid yourself."

The crook's eyes glared shiftily, and he seemed to find difficulty in answering for a moment.

"What rot is this?" he asked heatedly, as soon as he got control of himself. "I didn't do no job last night. I ain't done a thing since I came down the river!"

"Oh, yes, you did, Riley," the detective assured him. "You didn't get away with very much, to be sure—only about two hundred and forty thousand dollars' worth of radium; but you did it very neatly on the whole. I will have to give you credit for that, but business before friendship, you know. I'm afraid you'll have to come with me!"

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE WEIGHT OF NUMBERS.

The cracksman's eyelids fluttered for a moment before the detective's accusing ones, and a dull, brickish red surged up into his cheeks.

A second later, however, he was staring disgustedly into Carter's eyes.

"Aw, what are you dreaming about, Carter?" he demanded. "You sure slipped a cog this time!" He turned to his companions with a meaning grin, and sheepishly tapped his forehead with one stubby finger.

"Nobody at home, boys, nobody at home!" he remarked, using one of the latest catch phrases of the big city.

"I don't know nothing about your old radium," he continued, turning back to Nick. "I don't even know what the stuff is, except that the newspapers are whooping it up a lot for curing cancer. What are you trying to give us, anyway?"

"I'm going to give you a pair of bracelets in about half a minute, Riley," was the cool response.

"Like Hoboken you will!" snarled the crook while a sympathetic growl rose from the others in the room, who had closed in silently about the detective.

"Now look here, Carter," Jumpy went on threateningly. "You got me once, and you got me good. It wasn't much fun for me, but I took my medicine, and I didn't go gunning for you when I got back to town, either. I had reason enough, but I didn't do it. If you're looking for trouble now, though, you've come to the right dump, and you'll find Mr. Trouble himself right here, and a few little troubles—not so little, either! You ain't got nothing on me, and you ain't going to lay a finger on me!"

"No? What makes you think I'm not, Riley? Those eyes of yours have given you away already. I'll confess I wasn't sure you were my man when I came here, but I'm sure now, and you're going to come with me!"

"I've got a 'movie' of my coming with you!" sneered Jumpy, squaring away as if he were going to pitch into the detective, and then seemingly thinking better of it. "Look here, Carter," he went on, "just get this straight, will you? You've got me wrong—dead wrong. For two bits I'd wade into you and make a clean-up, but that wouldn't do no good. I tell you I didn't know there was any such job done last night, and this radium job ain't in my line, anyway. I can prove I wasn't anywhere near——"

He caught himself suddenly, with a startled look, and then stumbled on:

"Anywhere near the place where this thing was pulled off, wherever that was."

Carter had apparently failed to notice the betraying slip.

"You can prove that, eh?" he queried. "That will be interesting. How are you going to do it?"

"I was right here in these room until daylight this morning, sitting in a poker game—that's how I'm going to prove it," was the defiant answer. "These boys will back me up; won't you, fellows? Some of them was in the game. 'Benny'—this to an undersized, sallow-faced youth—'you annexed enough of my dough last night to be able to put Carter straight. Wasn't I here all the time from half past nine or ten o'clock until the milkman came around?'"

Benny nodded.

"You sure was, Jumpy," he declared, "and that goes. 'Red' here—indicating a fiery-haired, hard-visaged Irishman on the other side of the room—will give him the same info, if he don't want to take my word for it."

Red, in turn, shuffled forward belligerently.

"You've got another think due on account, Carter, and overdue, too," he declared roughly. "Next time I'd advise you not to horn in where you're not wanted until you can deliver the goods!"

"Oh, I'll deliver them, all right, Red," Nick replied easily. "You fellows must think I've just put on long pants. You didn't really believe I'd fall for anything like this, did you? It's too late, boys, altogether too late! Besides, I happen to know that Jumpy wasn't here last night at all, except maybe for an hour or so in the early evening."

This quiet announcement took the wind out of Riley's sails for a moment. Then he doubled his fists and edged up to the detective, with murder in his light, cruel eyes.

"You lie!" he cried hoarsely. "Anybody lies who says I wasn't here all last night!"

"Then your girl, Maggie Delaney, must be a liar, Jumpy," was the calm response. "I got that tip from her."

Riley gave an inarticulate growl and lunged forward at that, but Nick held up his left hand—his right was in his pocket, clasping the butt of his automatic, which had been pointed at the cracksman the most of the time. Something in his fearless, commanding attitude brought Jumpy to a halt, sputtering and shaking with rage.

"Now don't be hasty, Riley!" Nick cautioned. "Maggie didn't mean to give you away. She didn't know one of my men was within a mile of her, but he got the tip right from headquarters. You went to see Maggie last night, Jumpy, and stayed at her place until half past eleven. When you went you promised her some new clothes, because you said you were going to bring off the little affair that you had been planning for a couple of weeks or so, and because of which you had found it necessary to absent yourself from your favorite haunts around here every day during business hours. You see, I have you where I want you, Jumpy."

As he spoke he whipped a police whistle from his pocket, put it to his lips, and shrilly blew the prearranged signal.

A second later it was answered by another whistle from the street below.

Bellowing like a mad bull, Jumpy Riley snatched out a revolver and fired point-blank at the detective at a distance of not more than three feet.

The report was a deafening one in that low-ceilinged room; but the bullet went wild in spite of the close range, for one of the cracksmen's friends knocked up his arm just in time.

Almost simultaneously a young cyclone seemed to strike the place, and things happened so quickly that the eye could hardly follow them.

Black masks appeared as if by magic from the pockets of all those in the room, except Riley. They were clapped on, and their wearers changed places with a celerity that suggested previous rehearsal.

Then Carter was seized by a dozen hands at once, borne irresistibly backward, and whirled around so that his back was temporarily to the man he had come to arrest.

There was no time to use either of his automatics, and it would have been senseless to attempt it under the circumstances. He freed both hands and fought for all he was worth to break away from the gang, or at least to keep an eye on Jumpy.

There was no opportunity for fist work, however. Nick's arms and legs were gripped by many powerful hands, and he could only writhe and twist in their grasp, throwing himself from side to side as he struggled.

Meanwhile he was at a loss to explain the purpose of the strange attack. His assailants seemingly had no intention just then of disabling him in any way; certainly they made no attempt of that sort. The thought naturally flashed into the detective's mind that they were merely covering Jumpy Riley's retreat; but, since he and they were between Riley and the door leading downstairs, there did not seem to be any immediate danger of the radium robber's escape.

Suddenly there was a slight grating noise behind the fighting detective, followed by a slight thud, as if a door had been opened and closed. Almost immediately afterward the gang let go of Nick, and stepped back, just as if they had received an unspoken command from some mysterious leader.

Nick whirled about instantly, to find that Jumpy Riley had completely disappeared.

Yet no means of exit was visible except the door leading into the next room, and that remained open just as it had been ever since Nick's appearance in the clubroom.

He had heard something open and close, nevertheless. What was it?

His enemies gave him no time to speculate, however. They had merely called a halt for a fraction of a minute, to let the detective see that his quarry had vanished.

Now there was another unexpected movement. Several of those with whom Nick had been struggling, whose identity was now completely concealed by the somber masks they had donned, slipped silently out of the room into the adjoining one, and their places were immediately taken by others similarly masked.

Thereupon the whole lot pounced upon Nick once more, and this time it was plain that they meant deviltry of some sort.

Nick had taken the momentary opportunity to whip out both of his automatics. Now they barked almost simultaneously, and one of the masked men went down with a groan, and was trampled upon by his onrushing fellows.

The other shot found lodgment only in the wall of the room, and before the detective could fire again he was swept from his feet by sheer force of numbers, and crushed down viciously, somewhat as a runner with a ball is jumped upon and snowed under in a hotly contested football game.

The detective arched his back with all his strength to withstand the crushing pressure, but without avail. Hundreds of pounds of bone and brawn were on top of him, and he was brought panting to his knees. His arms were again gripped in many places, and one revolver had been wrenched from his hand. He managed to fire the other into one of the straining bodies, and had the satisfaction of feeling it relax; then he had to bring his hand down, revolver and all, to the floor, in order to keep his face from being ground into the boards.

The fight was as unequal as it could possibly be, for even had there been several times as many antagonists involved, no more of them could have beset the detective at a time.

In spite of that, Nick could have prolonged it indefinitely, and given his assistants and the police time to arrive, had not the tactics of his assailants changed in a twinkling.

Obviously they had not forgotten those police whistles, and realized full well the necessity for haste.

As if Carter's last shot had been the signal they were waiting for, the butt of a heavy revolver came down with crushing force on the back of Nick's head.

A maddening pain shot through him, and dazzling, changing colors danced drunkenly before his eyes. He did not lose consciousness immediately, however, despite the almost murderous character of the blow. Vaguely he knew, that, as he crumpled up, the gang parted and made way in front of him. Then he was seized again and dragged forward toward the corner in which Jumpy Riley had been. Something seemed to open, a rush of damp, close air fell on his nostrils, and he pitched forward headlong into emptiness.

He knew no more!

CHAPTER VIII.

JUMPY IS RUN TO EARTH.

Patsy Garvan reached the alley behind the headquarters of the Tim Kelly Association some five minutes before his chief coolly penetrated the gangsters' lair. His disguise was a rough, simple one, easily changed if occasion should require, but surprisingly effective.

He looked about him cautiously, locating the rear of the building occupied by the club, and then dodged into the back yard of a tenement just opposite. No one appeared to be looking in his direction, and he had the good luck to find shelter in a miniature shed, evidently built by children out of some fragments of packing boxes, and a sheet of tin roofing.

This formed a little lean-to against the alley fence in one corner of the yard, and sheltered him from view so far as the tenement windows were concerned. The fence itself performed the same service in the other direction, but the knot hole—it had doubtless been used in the same way by the tenement children—afforded him a view of the back gate of the premises which he was there to watch.

With a characteristic grin, and an expression of hope that the rightful tenants of the little shelter would not discover him, he crouched down and put his eye to the knot hole.

He had outgrown such quarters a good many years ago, and his cramped position was by no means comfortable, but he was ready to hold the fort for hours, if necessary.

He had no real expectation that Jumpy Riley would succeed in escaping from Nick, if the cracksman was still in the clubrooms. Nevertheless, it was well to be on the safe side of the fence, and well out of sight. What he was really waiting for was to hear Nick's whistle, however.

For that reason he was greatly surprised, and disagreeably so, when no less a person than Jumpy himself opened the gate and slunk out into the alley.

It was perhaps fifteen minutes after Patsy had established himself in the tenement yard.

Riley was in disguise, but Patsy knew him at once in spite of his rough workingman's garb, his cheap cloth cap, and the dinner pail with its inverted cup on top.

"Gee whiz!" muttered Patsy. "This is a queer go! I wonder how the mischief the fellow slipped through the chief's hands! If there's any whistling been going on, I'd better have my ears examined. I hope nothing serious has happened to the chief, but I can't stop to find out now. I've got other fish to fry. It's evidently up to little Patsy to chase this fellow to cover, and do a little rounding up on his own hook! Chick will have to take care of the rest."

Jumpy had passed out of range, so far as the knot hole was concerned, almost at once, and Patsy therefore crept gingerly out of his retreat, took another hasty glance at the windows overlooking the yard, and then stole to the back gate which stood ajar just as it had when he entered.

Peering around this he saw Riley proceeding at a slouching gait up the alley. He did not wish to show himself any sooner than necessary, for fear the fugitive would look around and see some one following him. Patsy had just about concluded that it was time for him to be moving, when he gave a start. Jumpy had unexpectedly turned in through one of the gates leading to a tenement yard which was one of the same row as that in which the young detective stood.

In a moment Patsy was out in the alley, and swiftly making his way to the place where Riley had disappeared. He had mechanically noted the number of gates between his own and that which the fugitive had used. When he came to the latter he found it closed, and the board fence prevented him from seeing into the yard. He sought another knot hole, but found none. It was a time for quick thinking if he did not wish Riley to make good his escape.

"He won't come out the same way he went in," he told himself. "That wouldn't be according to Hoyle. He may have a room there, although that isn't where he hangs out regularly. On the other hand, he may only be going through the building as a precaution against pursuit. In either case the proper thing for me to do seems to be to chase around to the front and watch at that mouse hole for a while."

His decision required only a second; the next he took to his heels. He slowed down, however, as he reached the nearest side street into which the alley opened, then, at a swift pace, but not one that would necessarily arouse any suspicion, he made his way around the block.

There was no sign of Riley in the street on which the tenements fronted, but that did not worry Patsy very much. It was theoretically possible that the man had slipped out the front door and entered one of the other buildings on the block, but Patsy did not think it likely, and was prepared to watch the others as well.

As for the possibility that Jumpy had succeeded in getting any farther away, that was out of the question, unless he, too, had taken to his heels as soon as the alley gate had closed behind him, which he would have had no reason to do since he could not have known he was under observation.

Patsy was right. His man had not permanently vanished. Jumpy reappeared not more than ten minutes later, coming out of the very building which Patsy had spotted as the one the fugitive had entered from the rear.

It was clear that Riley had a room there, or at least access to a flat occupied by some people he could trust, for he had elaborated his make-up to such an extent that even Nick's assistant would have had great difficulty in recognizing him, had it not been that he still wore the same clothes that he had worn in the alley, and carried the same innocent-looking dinner pail.

What looked like a scrubby growth now appeared on his cheeks and chin, and ran down to his soft, dirty collar. New lines showed in his face, giving it a totally different expression, which was helped out by a ruddy complexion, and shaggy eyebrows that were equally new.

"Pretty good work, Jumpy!" mused Patsy. "I'm afraid it won't do you much good, though."

The young detective was lounging against a lamp-post, and chaffing two or three grimy Italian boys, who were playing cat in the gutter near by. To all appearance he gave hardly a glance at the man with the dinner pail, but it might have been noticed that he slouched along after him before the supposed workingman had gone far.

"Wonder what he's up to now?" he speculated. "Jumpy Riley as an honest workingman is something of a joke! I don't believe he'll carry his imitation very far."

But Patsy was mistaken for once. It soon began to look as if Riley meant business, surprising as that was, for Nick's assistant trailed him without difficulty to one of the last places in the city to which he would have expected a man of Riley's kidney to go.

The crook's destination proved to be the nearest shaft leading down into the great aqueduct tunnel, which runs under the city at a depth of several hundred feet—it was seven hundred feet at that particular point—and was at that time nearing completion.

This tunnel is one of the greatest engineering feats of modern times. Its cost had been appalling, and in many respects it has been a much more difficult job than the Panama Canal itself, for it runs far under the ground for many miles. In fact, it begins in the distant Catskill Mountains, parallels the west bank of the Hudson to Storm King Mountain, not far from West Point, there plunges far under the great river, through solid rock, and then runs down the eastern side through the big borough of the Bronx, now a county in itself, under mile after mile of crowded Manhattan Island—the real New York—and then under the East River to Brooklyn.

Yet the task, although it has been in progress for years, has been carried on at such a depth that it is quite likely that hundreds of thousands of people in New York, or perhaps millions, could not even tell you its route under the city. They have so many new marvels in plain sight to talk about, and there is nothing aboveground to mark the course of the great tunnel, that is soon to furnish the city's water supply, except an occasional group of contractors' sheds, piles of material, and noisy hoisting machinery.

These mark the mouths of the shafts, and it was to one of them that Patsy trailed Jumpy Riley as the sun was setting.

"Stars and garters!" he muttered. "This is an unexpected turn on the program. Is it all a bluff? Does he know somebody here who will hide him, or does he really intend to try to get work? The tunnel would be

hard to beat as a place to hide, but the work part of it doesn't suggest Riley to me by a long shot!"

Nevertheless the crook had entered the little portable drab building that stood in the center of the street, on the door of which was the word "Office." When he reappeared, it was with a man, evidently an overseer, who led the way to the hoisting shed a few feet off.

The foreman soon reappeared alone, but there were no further signs of Jumpy, although Patsy had already taken pains to find that the hoisting shed had only one door.

Ten minutes passed, then fifteen, and still no Riley. Patsy had had enough of suspense, and presently strolled up to the closed door of the office and knocked loudly.

"Come in!" came a brisk voice from within.

Patsy accepted the invitation with alacrity, and entered the bare little one-room hut, the walls of which were plastered with blue prints. The man whom he had seen with Riley sat at a desk littered with papers. Patsy's advance was accomplished awkwardly, as befitted one of his supposed character.

"I heard you was taking on new hands for the night shift," he said. "Is that right?"

"Sure—night and day, both," was the answer. "We need a lot of them. Want a job? I just hired a husky fellow a few minutes ago, and sent him right down the shaft."

"No, I got a job," was the answer. "I was asking for a brother of mine. How much do you pay?"

The foreman told him, and, after a few more words, Patsy backed out, promising to send his "brother" around.

He had found out what he was after.

Jumpy Riley evidently believed in being thorough while he was about it, and had decided that a tunnel seven hundred feet beneath the street level of the East Side ought to be a pretty good place in which to play hide and seek until the storm had blown over. Nick's assistant was practically certain that Riley had not known he was being followed, therefore there was no reason to doubt the genuineness of the man's intentions to go to work in the tunnel, for that night, at least.

"They wouldn't let him go if he wanted to," the young detective decided, "so he's where we can lay our hands on him. I'm wondering, though, if he has any pals down there, or has tipped off any of the Tim Kellys to get work here, too. If he has, we may have our hands full before we get the nippers on him."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECRET OF THE RUG.

As we have seen, Chick Carter blew his police whistle as soon as he heard Nick's signal. A moment or two later the sound of two answering whistles came to his ears, one from either direction along the Bowery.

He looked quickly up and down the street, and saw two burly bluecoats approaching on the run from opposite directions. A crowd had already begun to collect about him, and he caught a bright-looking boy by the shoulders.

"Tell those cops when they get here that Nick Carter has gone up into the Tim Kelly rooms to nab Jumpy Riley. Ask them to whistle for more help, and then for one of them to follow me upstairs on the jump, while the other phones for the reserves. Get me?"

"I gotcha," was the answer.

With that Chick made a dive for the doorway leading upstairs. He had already heard the sounds of the struggle above, and knew that he would doubtless be outnumbered, but he did not hesitate for a moment on that account. He hoped to be able to turn the tables sufficiently, with Nick's assistance, and keep the gangsters busy until reënforcements arrived.

It did not work out that way, though.

The narrow hallway into which he had sprung not only led upstairs to the clubrooms, but also to a side door leading into Mike Boylan's saloon. Boylan himself, as it turned out, was a member of the club, and had, of course, heard the racket above and the repeated whistles. Calling his bartender to follow him, he had snatched up a full beer bottle and rushed out into the hall to see what aid he could render. The first possible weapon which the bartender's eyes lighted upon was a wooden spigot from an empty beer keg. He jerked this out of the keg, and took to his heels after his employer.

Thus it was that Chick found these two men in the passage ready to dispute his way upstairs. The elevated structure outside darkened the narrow hall considerably, however, and the young detective did not see his two opponents as soon as he otherwise would have done.

Boylan's strange, but formidable weapon, wielded by a powerful arm, had almost found its mark on his head before Chick sensed his danger, and leaped to one side.

The beer bottle missed his head, but came down with numbing force on his right shoulder. Chick's grasp relaxed on the automatic which he had already drawn, and he almost dropped the weapon, but, summoning all of his will power to his aid, he kept his hold on it, and thrust the little pistol rather shakily against the saloon keeper's broad chest before Boylan could recover himself from the vicious swing he had made.

"Cut that out, or by Heaven I'll drill a hole through you!" Nick's assistant cried menacingly.

Boylan had not counted on that sort of thing, and shrank back a little, his flabby jaw dropping. Seeing his advantage, Chick went on:

"You fellows had better keep out of this if you know what's good for yourselves! Nick Carter is upstairs making an arrest, and if we meet with any more resistance the Tim Kellys will be wiped off the face of the earth!"

The lank, but wiry, bartender was made of a little more venturesome stuff than his employer, however. His weapon was comparatively light, and seemingly incapable of doing much harm, but an inspiration suddenly came to him, and he used it in the most effective way possible.

He had slunk up behind Boylan's broad back, and Chick had hardly seen him, much less paid any attention to him. Now he straightened up, and unexpectedly thrust the hard-wood spigot over Boylan's shoulder full into Chick's face.

The young detective was not prepared for an attack of that kind. He saw the thing coming a little too late, and although he tried to dodge it, and knock it aside at the same time, he failed.

It struck him a little below one eye, and sent him sprawling backward, while tears of pain blinded him for a few minutes.

His weapon went off harmlessly as he fell, and Boylan, now a raging lion once more, threw himself upon him.

It might have gone hard with Chick if he had been left to the mercies of the roughs at that juncture, but just

then a six-foot bluecoat stormed through the front door, and took in the situation at a glance.

"Hey, Boylan! You there, 'Skinny'! Drop that!" the policeman bellowed.

The two men thus addressed stopped short like whipped curs, while Chick scrambled to his feet, one hand to his injured cheek.

"Don't bother about them now," he said. "If you know them you can nab them afterward. I am Chick Carter. Nick is upstairs after Jumpy Riley, who is wanted for that big radium robbery last night. There's a Donnybrook Fair going on up there, and I'm afraid the chief's getting the worst of it. We need all the help we can get, but we mustn't wait. Come on!"

Chick wiped his running eyes and sprang up the stairs in front of the officer, who thundered after him without an unnecessary question.

Chick had just time to realize that the rumpus in the clubrooms had ceased unaccountably before he reached the head of the stairs and jerked the door open.

It was a very peaceful and apparently innocent-looking scene that met his astonished gaze.

The reading room had miraculously resumed its normal appearance. The black masks—of which, of course, Chick knew nothing—had all disappeared, and the visible members of the Tim Kelly Association were sitting around the table lolling on their elbows and reading the papers, or lounging about in the chairs against the walls. The big "husky" with his roof on fire, whom Benny had addressed as Red, looked up in a surly fashion, but with well-simulated surprise, and demanded:

"Well, boys, what's itching you? You might come in a little more softly next time, but, of course, if there's anything we can do for you——"

"Where are Nick Carter and Jumpy Riley?" Chick interrupted sternly.

"Oh, them?" the red-haired giant answered carelessly. "Why, they went downstairs together about five minutes ago. Carter breezed in here like you fellows did, and tried to stick Jumpy up for some big job that was done last night; but, as Jumpy was here with us playing stud until the little birds got up this morning, we managed to convince his nibs that there was nothing doing."

"That's a lie!" declared Chick, his eyes snapping. "Nick whistled to me, and I heard a rough-house going on up here afterward. What have you done with him, and where's Riley?"

"I've told you, bo," insisted the gangster. "We was just having a little celebration after that know-it-all had to take water—that's all you heard."

"Quit your stringing us, Red!" the policeman cut in, stepping forward. "There's some dirty work been going on here, and I guess this is where the Tim Kellys gets what's coming to them. Your pals downstairs, Mike Boylan and his bartender, Skinny, tried to stop Chick Carter here, and were wading into him for all they were worth. If that don't mean business, I don't know what does."

"Nick couldn't have gone downstairs, anyway," added Chick. "We would have seen him if he had, for there are no back stairs to this place, are there? Besides, he wasn't going to whistle until he was sure Riley was the man he wanted."

"No, there's no other way out of the rooms that I know anything about," answered the officer. "We'll have to search the place."

"Just try it once!" growled Red, and threatening murmurs answered him from all quarters of the room.

Chick slipped his left hand into his pocket, and brought out a second automatic, the bluecoat at the same time producing his big service Colt.

The two stood with their backs to the open door, and covered the gangsters as well as they could with their three weapons. There were eight or ten of the Tim Kellys in the reading room, and doubtless more of them in the other rooms.

Chick was worried about Nick's mysterious disappearance, and that of Jumpy Riley. He therefore chafed under the delay, but he realized that it would be worse than folly to precipitate trouble until the reserves arrived; the odds were too great.

All of the gangsters were doubtless armed, and several of them had drawn their weapons, noticeably the men called Red and Benny. The slightest movement would doubtless bring a fusillade.

"If you fellows are looking for trouble," Chick remarked quietly, his glance traveling over the rigid barrels of his two weapons, and scanning the faces of the gang, "you are likely to find it without using those guns. You are in bad enough, already, and I'd advise you to remember it! The reserves will be here in a minute, and the whole lot of you will soon find yourselves in the cooler. After that little affair is attended to, we'll tear down these buildings, if necessary, to find Carter."

At that moment the second policeman joined them, having sent in a hurry call to the nearest precinct station house, which was only a few blocks away.

Almost immediately afterward, while the Tim Kellys were looking at one another furtively, as if they were trying to decide on a course of action, the gong of a patrol wagon sounded in the distance. Its clanging rapidly approached, and presently the patrol drew up outside with a clatter, and a dozen reserves, clubs in hand, leaped out.

Obviously the gangsters had decided not to offer any more resistance. They knew well enough that it would go hard with them if they did, and they probably hoped that nothing could be proved against them—aside from the charge of carrying concealed weapons—if they let well enough alone.

It was almost ludicrous to see their revolvers disappear, as the squad of bluecoats raced up the rickety stairs. Things moved rapidly after that, but although the Tim Kellys blustered and stormed, they made no other move. As a result they were quickly handcuffed, and hurried downstairs into the patrol wagon, where the policeman who had first come to Chick's assistance took pains to see that the saloon keeper and his assistant joined them.

While this was going on, Chick found time to search the rooms, closets, and lockers used by the club.

He found no trace of either of the men for whom he was looking, however, and no signs of any other exit—at least for some time.

Several of the policemen remained behind to assist him, and to round up any of the other members of the association who might put in an appearance and attempt to give trouble, but their presence hampered the young detective more than anything else. He had searched high and low for half an hour or more, sounding walls, and

peering into every crevice, before he at length solved the puzzle.

There were several small, cheap rugs on the floor of the reading room, and it occurred to Nick's assistant that it might be well to see if they concealed anything.

Some of them were tacked down and some were loose, but Chick found nothing suspicious underneath until he came to a rag rug in one corner of the room—the corner in which Jumpy Riley had been sitting when Nick first entered the place.

Curiously enough, this particular rug was fastened down, but not at the edges. It was loose for perhaps a distance of four inches all around, and then came rows of tacks, or, as closer examination proved, of small nails.

This peculiar circumstance attracted Chick's attention as soon as he laid hold of the rug to jerk it aside. There must be some reason for it, and, as his keen eyes detected that the rug was nailed down instead of tacked, the explanation came to him in a flash.

The nails must mark the inner edges of a trapdoor, the cracks about which were doubtless concealed by the loose, overlapping borders of the rug.

Sure enough, when he lifted the flap at one side, and peered underneath, he found a crack running along close to the point where the rug was fastened down. It was clear enough now, and also clear why nails had been used rather than tacks. They enabled the rug to be seized by the edge and lifted up without pulling it loose from the trapdoor, thereby making the latter's discovery less likely, and at the same time serving the purpose of a serviceable handle by which the door could be quickly lifted when required.

Suiting the action to the thought, Chick grasped two corners of the rug and pulled it upward. It came easily, bringing with it a square section of the flooring.

The hole revealed was about three feet square.

"For the love of Mike!" ejaculated one of the policemen, who had been watching the young detective's maneuver. "That's what we've been looking for, but where in thunder does it lead?"

Chick bent down and thrust his head into the dark opening, sniffing the air as he did so.

"It's a chute that ends in the saloon cellar, I should say," he answered. "It winds up underground somewhere, anyway, by the smell. One of you watch this end, and the rest come with me!"

With that he bounded off and clattered down the stairs with three bluecoats at his heels.

CHAPTER X.

UNDER A BEER-KEG COVERLET.

When Nick Carter came to he found himself lying on a cold, damp, concrete floor, with a rough stone wall at one side of him.

Similar experiences were common enough to him, and equally familiar was the fact that he was bound hand and foot, and gagged.

The thing that lent an air of novelty, if not of comfort, to his plight, however, was the fact that he was flanked on three sides with empty beer kegs, standing erect, and that more kegs were piled loosely on top of him.

He was in pitch darkness, and lying on one side with his face to the wall, but he was able, nevertheless, to make this interesting discovery, partly by the sense of smell, and partly by exploring with his bound hands, which were behind his back.

"Well, there's nothing like novel experiences," he told himself, making a wry face in the darkness. "I have no doubt this is a very inoffensive-looking pile of empties when looked at from the other side. The question is: How did I get here, and also, how am I going to get out?"

As his brain cleared he began to remember a little more of his vague sensations after he received that crack on the head.

"They must have opened a trapdoor in the floor and dumped me down a chute of some sort," he reasoned. "It couldn't have been a straight drop, for I'd be having a few broken bones, if not a broken neck, in that case. I must be in the cellar of the saloon, and that means that a boxed-in slide must pass through Boylan's rear room from the clubrooms above. But how about these ropes? I'm sure they didn't bind me before they shunted me down here. I remember smelling the cellar air, and then being booted off into space, but that is all. Maybe somebody slid down the chute after me, and used me for a mattress at this end, or else came down through the saloon. Anyway, I was evidently tied up after I got here."

He found himself wondering what had happened upstairs, and what had become of his assistants. He had no fears about his speedy release if Chick and Patsy hadn't been knocked out as well, for he had perfect confidence in their ability, sooner or later, to nose out the trapdoor and find their way to the cellar. Nevertheless, he had no intention of remaining idle, and waiting to be found.

The kegs felt uncomfortably heavy, especially on the side of his head, but he knew that they could hardly be more than two or three deep. He had doubtless been put there only for temporary concealment, and without any very sinister purpose. He believed that the gangsters were afraid to go to any very great lengths after his public arrival in broad daylight, but they had been forced to do something with him. Presently, as he made an effort to roll over with the intention of getting his back under the kegs and attempting to push them off of him, a thought flashed across his mind, and he gave up the effort for the moment.

"Of course!" he muttered. "Why didn't I think of that sooner? That chute explains how Jumpy gave me the slip, as well as how they disposed of me. That means that he, too, landed here in the cellar, and probably made his way out through the back room of the saloon and into the alley. Well, I couldn't ask anything better than that if Patsy was attending to business—and it's safe to say he was. That makes me feel better, and here goes!"

With the greatest difficulty he squirmed over on his chest. His arms were tied behind him, and therefore he could not raise himself on his hands. He still had his head, however, and he determined to use that, placing his forehead as lightly as he could on the concrete, considering the weight of the empty kegs which were bearing down on him. He arched his neck and raised his shoulders slightly, pulling his chin in as he did so. The result was that the upper part of his burdened body was presently supported on the front part of his head. It was a very awkward and precarious maneuver, and well cal-

culated to give any one a headache, but Nick proved to be quite equal to the situation.

As a matter of fact, he could probably have lifted a much greater weight in that fashion with a little practice.

The peculiar nature of his burden, however, and the fact that he had no hands to balance himself, made it a ticklish business. Nevertheless, he kept one side against the wall, and continued to arch his back until his body described a curve from his knees to the top of his head. If the kegs that had been piled on top of him had remained in place in spite of this upheaval, his attempt might have failed, for it would have been doubly difficult to raise his head and shoulders, under the circumstances, without any support at all to keep him from toppling forward.

Luckily, however, most of the loosely piled kegs now rolled off to the concrete floor with a great clatter.

The next moment a door opened, letting in a little light, and Nick heard his senior assistant's voice. Chick had been alarmed by the noise, and took the cellar stairs in two or three bounds, an automatic in one hand, and his flash lamp in the other. When the rays of the latter picked out the detective, however, the tension naturally relaxed at once. The gag was removed from Nick's mouth immediately, and his first words were:

"Where's Patsy?"

"By George, I never thought of him!" ejaculated Chick. "I haven't seen anything of him."

"Good!" was the rather surprising answer. "Then he must have set sail after Jumpy."

Explanations were in order, and quickly given. For a time they were puzzled to account for the disappearance of the two men whom Nick had wounded in the clubrooms. Chick had seen no vestige of either of them when he arrived, but it was decided that they must have been sent down the chute immediately after Nick, and had either been able to take themselves off, or else had been removed through the rear of the saloon under cover of the excitement upstairs.

Their wounds would doubtless make it comparatively easy to locate them, but there was no hurry about that.

The two detectives and the policemen made their way upstairs, where Nick put himself into presentable shape again, while Chick used Boylan's phone, to give Joseph, the butler, its number, in case Patsy should try to get in touch with them.

A single bartender remained in charge of the saloon, and looked as if he was afraid to breathe. They decided to make their headquarters there for a time, because of its convenient location in the midst of the section which Jumpy knew best, and in which he would be most likely to take cover.

It was not until Nick showed himself at the door of the saloon and caught sight of his car standing in the street, that he gave a thought to his chauffeur.

"By gad!" he exclaimed. "What's become of Danny? I told him to lend a hand if there was any trouble."

'Search me!" Chick answered blankly. "I haven't seen a thing of him since you drove up."

A curious crowd, largely composed of boys and youths were still hanging around the front of Boylan's place. One of the boys evidently caught the two detective's words, for he edged forward excitedly.

"Is you lookin' fer the feller that wuz shuffin' yer car, mister?" he asked, addressing Nick. "Abie Solink sneaked up behind him and bumped him on the bean as he wuz comin' ter help yer, and they took him in next door."

Full of concern, Nick and his assistant hurried into the drug store adjoining. They were met at the door by Danny himself, however. The chauffeur's head was swathed in bandages, but there was a grin, although a rather sheepish one, on his face.

"I'm mighty sorry I didn't get in for the fun, sir," he said, "but somebody gave it to me good and proper before I even got a look-in. I was wandering around in dreamland for some time, and after I woke up they insisted in harnessing me up in this fashion. If it hadn't been for that, I'd have reported for duty sooner."

Chick quickly obtained their young informant's name and address, and, thanks to his friendly tip, there seemed to be little doubt that the gangster who had attacked Danny would hear from it later.

They had hardly returned to Boylan's saloon before the telephone rang. Patsy was on the other end of the wire, having called up Nick's house and learned of the detective's whereabouts.

It did not take long for young Garvan to inform his chief of Jumpy Riley's strange choice of a hiding place, and plans were quickly made for a descent into the aqueduct tunnel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BATTLE IN THE TUNNEL.

Three men were descending the deep, vertical shaft leading to the great tunnel, their "elevator" being nothing more than a big, metal bucket, swinging at the end of a cable.

They were Nick Carter, Chick, and Patsy, but there was nothing in the appearance of any of them to suggest that fact. Their faces had undergone a complete transformation, their clothes were of the roughest and coarsest sort, their shoes were heavy, thick-soled affairs, and liberally stained with clay. Each of them carried a dinner pail, just as Jumpy Riley had done.

To all appearance they were merely three more humble individuals, who had sought and found work far down beneath New York's teeming East Side.

All arrangements had been made with those in charge of that section of the tunnel, and, on the chance that Jumpy might have friends with him underground, a strong force of police was stationed at the top of the shaft, ready to descend as soon as possible in case of serious trouble.

An unusually large number of applications for work had been received since Riley had offered his valuable services, and there was no knowing how many of the crook's friends might now be in the tunnel, prepared to defend him against possible capture.

Nevertheless, the detectives had refused all offers of the police to accompany them on their dangerous errand. Three of them would certainly be more than enough to handle Riley himself, no matter how desperate his resistance, and they did not wish to bring along a lot of police on any false errand.

As soon as they reached the bottom of the shaft they reported to the foreman in charge of the gang there. He already knew of the situation, and informed them that the man whom Patsy had described had been sent a quarter of a mile or so to the southward, where he

was engaged in shoveling into hand cars the rock and clay dislodged by the last blast.

Nick and his assistants accordingly set off in that direction, having been furnished with shovels and picks by the friendly overseer. Their intention was to report for work to the boss of that particular gang, and give him the hastily scribbled note of introduction.

Then, under cover of their supposed character, they meant to locate Jumpy Riley, determine, if possible, whether he had any pals with him, and then take steps to secure him and any one else who might try to interfere with them—unless they had reason to believe they would require assistance.

It was a strange world in which they found themselves. There was no difficulty about walking upright in the big tunnel, but they found it hard to believe that they were under one of the most thickly settled sections of the great metropolis. For some distance they walked through a rounded tube of thick concrete, with a narrow-gauge track laid in the middle of it, but soon they came to a point where the concrete ended, and only a raw hole in the bowels of the earth remained.

Its roughly hewn walls, dripping here and there with moisture, its dim lights and dancing shadows, and the wet, uneven floor, suggested the heart of some huge mountain.

They trudged on, however, picking their way as best they could. Now and then they passed a workman, or were obliged to shrink back against the walls to allow a little car, loaded with débris, to be pushed past them.

They scanned the faces of those thus employed, but none of them was the man they sought.

At length, after perhaps ten minutes, they neared the place where the work was in progress. The man in charge of the gang, a heavily built, powerful Italian, espied them and strode a little ways to meet them.

"Some mora of you, eh?" was his greeting. "Well, I can usa you all right."

Nick slipped the head overseer's note to him, and began speaking swiftly in a low tone.

"We are detectives," he explained, "and we are after a man who joined your gang a couple of hours ago, but we don't want him to suspect us until we are ready to jump him, so don't act any different to us, whatever you do. Set us to work, and order us around as much as you please."

The Italian, who had been in this country for a number of years, and had often heard of Nick Carter, quickly took his cue after he had read his superior's scrawled words under the nearest light.

"Geta busy now!" he commanded them loudly, and they pulled off their coats, rolled them up—their weapons were already in their trousers—and deposited them, together with their dinner pails, beside a row of like objects. Then, seizing their picks and shovels again, they followed the Italian and went to work under his direction.

He had separated them, however, and scattered them through the gang, so that they would have a good chance to pick their man.

Patsy was the only one who was familiar at firsthand with Jumpy's new disguise, and, as luck would have it, the young detective found himself within half a dozen feet of Riley.

He waited for some time, however, before he gave Nick and Chick the signal, for he wished to learn, if possible, whether Riley was on confidential terms with any of the other workmen in the vicinity. By using his eyes and ears to good advantage, he soon made up his mind that no less than four of the other men had some secret in common with Jumpy. Their remarks were guarded enough, to be sure, for the very good reason that they were working in the midst of others who were unknown to them, and who they did not care to trust. Nevertheless, their veiled allusions were obvious enough to any one who had the key to them, as Patsy had.

Plainly these others must be gangsters, too, and probably also members of the Tim Kelly Association, who had volunteered to help their comrade out of a hole—or, literally speaking, into one.

That meant that the odds were at least five to three against the detectives. Some of the other men might come to their aid in an emergency, but that was hardly likely, and they did not count on it. There was no opportunity to acquaint the others with the situation, and, when hostilities began, things would doubtless develop too rapidly for the onlookers to feel justified in taking sides.

Nevertheless, Nick and his assistants were accustomed to fighting their own battles so far as possible, and therefore they still hesitated about asking the active cooperation of the police.

Patsy had now managed to sidle up to his chief and pass on the word, keeping up a pretense of energetic work all the time, and Nick in turn had conveyed the information to Chick.

A little lull followed, and then the three detectives maneuvered so that they were working side by side at some little distance from the five men under suspicion. They quickly made their final plans in guarded tones, and then waited for a favorable opportunity to spring the trap.

It soon came, and, retaining their spades in their left hands, and clasping their revolvers in their pockets with their right, they spread out a little and advanced a few paces.

One of the five must have scented something suspicious about their actions, for he threw a quick word to his companions, and Jumpy and the others whirled about. A moment later Nick's voice rang out, and each of the detectives drew his automatic and covered one of the group.

"Throw up your hands, Jumpy Riley, and the rest of the bunch!" Carter commanded, leveling his own weapon full at the stocky cracksman.

Instead of obeying, two or three of the gang swung their spades around their heads and sent them twisting and hurtling at the detectives. The latter instinctively tried to dodge these unusual missiles, and the momentary confusion resulting was taken advantage of by the gangsters.

They all drew their weapons, and fired a ragged volley that echoed and reechoed deafeningly through the tunnel. The bullets sang uncomfortably close to the detectives' ears, and chipped the rocks here and there behind them, no wounds resulted.

Nick and his companions answered the fire a fraction of a second later, and then, before Riley and his friends could shoot again, ducked for cover behind a loaded hand car which stood a little to one side of them.

They now had the advantage of fighting from behind a breastworks. Their enemies looked about them wildly for a similar shelter, but found nothing handy except a low pile of earth and stones which had not yet been cleared

after the last blast. This was not more than two or three feet high, but they instinctively flattened themselves behind it, and held their fire until one of the detectives should show himself.

When hostilities began, the big Italian foreman had called the other men aside, and briefly explained the situation to them. The two little opposing forces were therefore given plenty of room to fight it out between them, but the noncombatants were still in danger from deflected bullets.

Suddenly there was an unexpected report from behind the detectives, and a bullet buried itself in the wooden side of the hand car between Nick and Patsy. To their astonishment they found themselves between two fires. They glanced over their shoulders and saw a smoking revolver in the hands of one of the men who had retreated with the Italian out of the line of fire. He was in the act of firing again, and yet they did not dare to reply for fear of hitting one or more of those about him.

Evidently this man was also one of Jumpy Riley's pals, who had happened to be working at a distance from the rest. He was now taking advantage of his opportunity, and it looked decidedly serious for a moment.

Before he could let drive again, however, the big overseer crept up behind him, whirled a spade aloft, and brought it down on the gangster's head. The man crumpled up with a smothered groan, and all danger from that quarter was removed.

But another and far more terrible danger which no one seemed to have thought of in the rush of events was impending.

CHAPTER XII.

A STRAY SHOT.

Nick and Patsy were at the nearest corner of the hand car, the former standing up, the latter crouching down, and both prepared to disable any of the gunmen who might show themselves above their insufficient shelter. Chick, meanwhile, was at the other corner of the car, peering about cautiously with the same intent. Suddenly Jumpy's head and shoulders reared themselves for a moment above the pile of débris. Nick and young Garvan could have killed him without any trouble, but they had no intention of doing that. Both fired, however, almost simultaneously, the reports being merged in that of Jumpy's own revolver. The radium robber's shot struck one of the metal reënforcements of the car, and slithered away harmlessly. But one of the detectives' shots—probably Nick's, as he had fired a fraction in advance of his assistant—buried itself in Riley's shoulder. The man sank behind the barricade with a groan, and Patsy's shot sang over the breastworks without finding human target.

It found another and unexpected one, though. It struck a jutting rock in the unfinished wall of the tunnel behind the crouching gangsters, and glanced aside some twenty feet. Beyond Riley and his friends, and well out of the direct line of fire, was an open wooden box, containing several sticks of dynamite, in readiness for use when the holes should be drilled for the next blast.

The strayed bullet must have entered this box and struck one of the sticks of explosive, for an ear-splitting report followed.

The three detectives, and, in fact, all of the onlookers who were huddled some thirty feet behind them, were dashed to the ground as if by some gigantic but unseen hand.

Chaos reigned, and it seemed as if the very earth itself were breaking apart. An ominous roar, deep and terrifying, followed the first shattering report, and tons upon tons of rock were dislodged from the roof of the tunnel, blocking it completely just between the spot where the detectives had stood and that occupied by Riley and his desperate gunmen.

Deafened and half blinded, Nick and his assistants scrambled to their feet as soon as the rocking roar had ceased, and were appalled to find themselves confronted by a seemingly impenetrable wall of débris, which choked the tunnel completely from floor to roof, and separated them from the unfortunate gangsters.

It did not seem possible that any of the latter had escaped death in one of its most frightful forms.

"That settles Jumpy and his pals, I'm afraid, poor devils!" Nick murmured soberly, as he surveyed the scene. "The life must have been instantly crushed out of the whole lot of them."

The Italian foreman and his men presently ventured near, and men came running in ever-increasing numbers from the direction of the shaft by which the detectives had descended. With them came the squad of police, for the Italian had sent one of his men to summon them without Nick's knowledge.

The colossal and seemingly hopeless task of digging out the buried gangsters was immediately begun. Every one who could possibly work to advantage in that confined space attacked the mountain of débris with desperate energy.

In spite of that it was long past midnight before the gunmen were reached. Strange to relate, three of them, including the wounded Jumpy, were still alive.

They owed their almost miraculous escape to the fact that the roof of the tunnel was shored up with heavy timbers just above where they were, and they were thus discovered in a sort of pocket in the midst of the fallen mass. In spite of that precaution, however, two of them had been crushed almost out of recognition, and must have been killed instantly, and none of them had escaped broken bones. Riley had a fractured arm and a crushed foot, in addition to the wound in his shoulder.

Under the circumstances it may be imagined that the survivors were in no mood to offer any further resistance by the time they were dug out. They were removed on stretchers and sent to a hospital, where they remained constantly under guard until they had recovered sufficiently to be taken to the Tombs. All of the others received heavy sentences for carrying concealed weapons, and resisting officers in the discharge of their duty, but Jumpy Riley himself was held for trial pending further developments.

He made a partial confession to Nick Carter, but insisted that the great radium robbery had not been his own idea, but that he had been hired to do the job for five thousand dollars, and had been thoroughly coached in his part.

He stuck to it, however, that the missing two hundred and forty thousand dollars' worth of radium had passed out of his hands the morning after the robbery.

That might be true or not, together with the rest of

his story, but the fact remained that the radium continued to elude Nick's search.

It was obvious, therefore, that something remained to be done before the case could be finally cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Lambert Radium Reduction Company and the detectives themselves

THE END.

Needless to say, the great detective did not drop his quest for the stolen radium and the master criminal who had directed the crime. You will read about Nick's further efforts in the next issue of this weekly, No. 89, out May 23d. The title of the story is "A Crime in Paradise; or, Nick Carter's Indian Guide."

The Syndicate of Crime.

Or, King Nelson's Puzzling Quest.

By HARRIE IRVING HANCOCK.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIVER FISHERS.

"Pull slower, girl!"

"Slower it is, then."

"Still slower!"

"Slower!"

"My eyes ain't what they used to be," whined Luke Strull, as, kneeling on the bow seat of the boat, his horny, weather-beaten hands clutching either thwart, he peered hawkishly ahead, striving to pierce the fog that hung over the river.

The girl, slowly rowing, made no answer.

"Ain't earned our breakfast yet, have we?" half asked the old man, in his habitual complaining tone.

"Depends on what we eat," said the girl noncommittally.

There was not the slightest inflection in her voice. She bent over at the oars, rowing without physical lassitude, though her face, handsome as it was, spoke in every line of weariness and sickness of this life she was compelled to live.

It certainly seemed, on looking at her, as if she should have been born to better things. Of medium height, mature and rounded figure, with a face that an artist would turn to see again, and hair only a shade or two darker than golden, she looked more like some splendid Saxon wood goddess than the offspring of seamy-faced, crafty, cunning, repulsive Luke Strull. The settled look of scorn and loathing in her eyes at this moment made her beauty the more striking.

Blanche was a puzzle to the water-front people of Jersey City. None knew her mother, who, Luke said, had died when the girl was a tiny baby. Luke had drifted to his present haunts after his wife's death, bringing up the child without woman's aid. She had grown up despite the lack of care, running wild, yet without harm, in the little time that Luke had allowed the child to herself.

Somehow, somewhere, she had picked up the art of reading. Such few books as came her way Blanche had managed, despite frequent scenes with Luke, to study.

In the same mysterious way she had picked up some of the knack of sewing, and surely no woman could have made better use of her meager opportunities in the way of dress. Her skirt this morning—one of the two she owned—was of faded blue serge. Her waist, open at the throat and affording just a hint of virginal bosom—was of a plaid stuff, cheap to the point of dinginess. Yet there was a certain mingled dignity and coquetry to this otherwise mean attire. A man would have said the girl's whole great charm lay in her pink and white and golden beauty.

Blanche, at the age of nineteen, had had just a dozen offers of marriage. She had declined just a dozen. Some of the suitors had been honest, sober, industrious, brawny, longshoremen and the like—others belonged to the worthless riffraff that may always be found in the life along a busy water front.

But one was a scow contractor—a great, hulky, black-browed fellow, loud of mouth, but with a keen eye to business. He was a Crœsus among the poor water-front folk. He had privately offered Luke Strull two thousand dollars the day the girl should become his.

Nor had Luke, who made money his idol, neglected his last effort to win the reward. There had been days and days of stormy scenes, but the girl had persisted in her refusal of even the scow contractor.

Had any of Blanche's humble admirers possessed the imagination, they would have said she was waiting for Prince Charming to come into her life. Yet, after her refusal of the scow contractor, who wore a heavy gold chain, a real and massive diamond, and who insolently "flashed" a portly roll of bills—what could she want?

Blanche held her peace. The secret was safe in her own pretty head.

Her life? Always the same as now. The boat and a glance at Luke told the story.

In the bottom of the boat lay an odd pile of box tops, broken-off beams, empty bottles, the flotsam and jetsam of an outgoing tide, the floating junk of the North River.

Luke was a professional fisher of the tide. He had been ever since Blanche could remember. She had always been his companion in the boat.

They were prowling below the regular track of the frequently crossing railroad ferry boats. Only an occasionally early excursion steamer, or towboat with its string of barges, was to be avoided. Keen hearing and instinct enabled the girl to keep out of their way, even in the early spring fog, without seeming to try.

"Times are getting mighty hard for honest folks," broke in Luke's whining voice again. "Ah! Quick, girl! To the right—that looks like something!"

Blanche turned to make out the object, then landed the boat exactly alongside. Luke, with trembling hands, eagerly pulled in the object, an old canvas bag, probably dropped accidentally from some passing steam craft. His face working with covetousness, he forced open the bag; then gave a snort of disappointment at the contents, a few well-worn articles of feminine attire.

"Whole lot won't fetch more'n fifty cents!" he grumbled. "Wait, though!"

From the folds of one of the garments he snatched up a gold pin with a cackle of delight.

"The real metal! That'll bring five dollars. Ah, Blanche, not a bad morning in these hard times, eh?"

"I hope it will satisfy you," responded the girl wearily.

But Luke paid no heed to her discontent. His fingers, shaking as with palsy, were frantically pawing through the rest of the dingy garments.

"Nothing more," he sighed. "Well, pull upstream, girl."

Silently Blanche brought the boat's head around in the fog. Luke, his eyes sharpened by the recent glimpse of gold, was doubly vigilant.

"This fog, that hides things so, is a downright shame," grumbled the old man.

"It saves us from being seen by the police," was the girl's bitter rejoinder.

"That'll do you now—that'll do!" came the sharp censure.

For ten minutes Blanche pulled steadily on.

"Hold! Steady! What's that over in the edge of the fog to the left? Get it, girl!"

Blanche's eyes, keener than his, made out the object, and she shuddered. For a second or two it seemed as if she would rebel. Then, with an unwonted grimness about the corners of her mouth, she brought the boat alongside the object.

On top of the swelling water, headfirst and face upturned, floated the body of a young woman.

"The coroner pays ten dollars' reward for a find like this!" cackled old Luke, bending out so far over the boat's thwart that it made the craft careen.

"Don't!" protested Blanche, with a little feminine cry as her father twined his profane hands in the dead woman's raven hair to draw the body nearer.

"Hold your tongue!" snarled Luke, drawing the body nearer through the water. Then, in a tone of admiration: "Wasn't she a stunner? Girl, your pretty face couldn't hold a candle to that one when alive!"

And Blanche, her curiosity overcoming repugnance as she glanced at the still, dead face, admitted it to herself.

"She was a high-stepper, that one!" went on Luke, his eyes gloating over his valuable find. "Look at that dress—never cost a cent less than fifty good dollars," he finished, with masculine vagueness.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Blanche, in an odd voice, as her father reached back into the boat with one hand.

"Get a line, fasten it to the dear departed, and tow her behind," announced Luke.

"Don't do anything like that," begged Blanche, a great wave of pity for this unfortunate member of her sex sweeping over her. "It doesn't seem just—just reverential."

"What shall I do?"

"Lift the poor thing into the boat."

"Will you help me?"

"Yes."

Luke gave in. He found it sometimes saved time to do so. Between them, with the skill of river fishers, they lifted the still form in, laying it in the bottom of the boat, aft.

"Somebody might see it," mumbled Luke. Fishing out an old square of canvas from under a seat, he threw it loosely over the body.

Blanche took up the oars.

"Now where?" she demanded.

"Home, girl!"

"Home—with this?"—pointing to the canvas.

"Yes, of course. Do you suppose I'm going to turn a fine dresser like this over to the coroner wtihout seeing what's in the clothes?"

A few minutes of steady rowing, which fatigued those perfectly sculptured arms not in the least, brought them to the place which she and Luke called home.

A rickety wharf at which scows and barges sometimes loaded jutted out into the stream. Near the shore end stood a story-and-a half shanty, on the ground floor of which were three living rooms and a junk-littered shed which Luke called his store, and from which he sold the varied articles picked up in the river.

With a skill of practice, Blanche guided the boat under the low wharf, between the rotting piles, close to the shore, bringing the gunwale alongside a ladder that ran up to a trapdoor overhead.

While Blanche made the boat fast, Luke ascended the short ladder, unfastened the padlock on the trap, and threw it up.

As he stepped back to the boat, Blanche nimbly ran up the rungs. She stepped into their living room, a gloomy apartment, half filled with the stuff that the river brought them.

Through this room she made her way to an inner one, her chamber.

Bare enough it was, with uncarpeted floor, its old rickety bedstead, a table made of a chintz-covered box, and one half-decrepit chair. Yet over the two tiny windows were curtains of spotless white muslin, on the bed a coverlet of the same material. Blanche had given the mean apartment the touch of her own unstained personality as far as she could. She reappeared in the other room just as Luke, bearing the body on his shoulders, came up through the trap.

"Bring her in here," urged Blanche, pointing over her shoulder.

"Who, the dear departed?" demanded the old man. He halted in amazement, still holding the ghastly burden on his back.

"Yes, in here. Put her on my bed."

"You're mighty particular about a thing like this," grunted the old man, as he slowly complied. "S'pose you know that after I've—after a little, I'm going to chuck the dear departed back in the water, hitch her to the stern of the boat, and row to——"

"We'll see about it," broke in Blanche, throwing herself on her knees beside the bed as the old man laid the body there.

"Murder," said Luke, in a matter-of-fact voice. "See that blue line around her throat? Choked!"

"Surely she must have had everything to live for," half sobbed Blanche, gazing at the still face with infinite tenderness. "Beautiful, a tender home, wealth lavished on her. She must die, while such as I live!"

"Wealth?" cackled Luke. "I should say so! And we're losing time!"

He moved nearer to the bed, bent over, but Blanche, bounding up with the litheness of a panther, exerted all her strength to send the old man spinning away.

"What do you mean to do?" she demanded, as Luke came slowly, doggedly back.

"You know well enough," her father said gruffly. "Search the clothes, of course. There may be valuables some other fellow overlooked."

"Don't you dare touch her!" panted Blanche, her breast heaving.

"One of us has got to. Will you do it, then?"

"Yes," said the girl, in an odd voice, after a moment's inward struggle. "But you keep away—do you hear?"

"Yes," assented the river fisher sullenly. "Look in her pocket first."

Blanche did so, drawing out a purse. Luke uttered a cry of delight as he saw the girl finger the contents of the purse, greenbacks among them.

"Not a word—not a line to say who she was," cried Blanche, in disappointment.

"But the money," trembled Luke, starting forward. "How much?"

"Fifty-seven dollars and some change."

"Oh, this is a good morning—a great morning—a rich morning!" quiveringly cried the river fisher, bounding at her. "Give the money to me."

But Blanche, eluding him, thrust the purse into her bosom.

"What are you going to do?" he demanded hoarsely.

"What any honest woman would do," came the scornful retort. "If this girl's friends are never found, then rest easy, you shall have the money."

Muttering, cursing, Luke finally added:

"The skirt—the waist, there may be something sewed into the lining, you know."

Blanche's swift, nimble fingers glided over the sodden garments.

"Yes, there is something sewed in under the hem of the skirt," she announced, her fingers resting on the spot.

Then, picking up a pair of scissors from the table, she snipped and removed her find—a small package sewn up in cloth.

Snip! snip! Luke looked on, dizzy with lust of treasure. Blanche emptied the package into her hands. Little objects glittered and glistened there.

"Jewelry—diamonds!" exclaimed Luke, his narrow eyes growing big with glee and wonder. "Give them to me."

"Just as I did the money! Father, you've got to be honest once in a while."

"And you've got to be obedient, girl, or I'll make you!" chokingly exclaimed Luke, turning livid. He ran into the next room, returning with a cudgel, uplifted.

"Strike!" jeered the girl, with cool contempt. "Strike, and I'll tell the police about——"

Clack! The cudgel fell to the floor.

Turning with superb unconcern from the angry, frightened old man, Blanche took the step that brought her back to the bedside.

At that very moment something happened that made this miserable river waif thrill with awe.

"Father! Look at her! The eyelids flutter! The lips tremble! Thank God, this beautiful unknown lives—breathes!"

CHAPTER II.

PHIL DARRELL'S INSPIRATION.

"She lives—breathes—yes, curse her!" muttered Luke, scowling down at the unconscious girl.

"Are you not glad?" demanded Blanche sharply.

"Me—glad?" retorted Strull. "I'm no such fool! If this girl comes to life, the money, the diamonds fly out of the window."

Then, shaking as if a fit of vertigo had seized him, old Luke looked fearfully about, next leered craftily into the girl's face as he lowered his voice to a whisper:

"See here, Blanche, it ain't right that we poor people should lose so much money. S'posin' the money and the diamonds come to us? You shall have a ten-dollar bill to do just what you please with, and one of the diamonds. You like the pretty sparkling things—all women do. This handsome critter"—again Luke glowered at the white face and tremulous lips on the bed—"she was dead when we found her. She ain't no right to come to life and cheat us out of our findin's. She'd have stayed dead if we hadn't brought her here. We'll drop her back into the water, girl!"

"Try it!" sneered Blanche coolly.

"I will," was the stolid answer.

He tried to edge nearer the bed, but Blanche sprang squarely in his way, her eyes blazing so furiously that the cowardly old rascal quailed, cowered, and slunk back.

"Just listen to reason, girl," whined Luke.

"I will listen to nothing from you at present," exclaimed Blanche, with a quiver of the lips. "Don't I know what you are trying to do? You want to keep me talking so that this poor creature will, perhaps, die through my neglect. Luke Strull—father—hear the last word I've got to say to you at present. If you don't quit this house, and keep away for the next two hours, I'll——"

"Well," jeered Luke, his effrontery returning, "what'll you do?"

"I swear by my mother," cried Blanche, raising her steady hand aloft, "that I'll put you behind bars! Oh, I know enough of you to do it, and when my father turns murderer, I owe him no more duty."

She meant it, every word. Luke saw that, and again turned coward before her stronger will.

"How'll I put in the time?" he asked weakly.

"That gold pin you found this morning, take it and sell it. Now, are you going?"

"Yes," grumbled the old man, shuffling out of the room.

Beyond the door he turned, with suddenly hopeful face, to suggest:

"Maybe you're right, Blanche. This girl's rich. If you save her life she ought to pay you handsome."

"Perhaps she will," retorted the river waif indifferently.

"You'll hint at it?"

"Are you going? If not, I'll do just as I told you I would."

Bang! The outer door closed, and Luke was gone.

"Now, my princess," murmured Blanche, bending over the bed, "we'll see if we can bring you back to life."

Taking one of the cold hands, Blanche began to chafe it with energy. Then, in her crude, untaught, unskillful way, she resorted to the usual means for resusciating the drowned. Under that friendly, strong ministration, the flesh of the white hand soon began to glow and take on warmth.

A sigh broke through the lips.

"You're going to live, dear, you're going to live!" cried Blanche, her eyes luminous. For the hour, at least, she had in this helpless, dainty creature, some one to love for the first time in her life.

With a vague idea that this was a case needing stimulant, the girl rose and ran into the next room to the cupboard, where she knew Luke kept his brandy.

The bottle was half full. Blanche flew back with it to the bedside, forcing open the livid lips and pouring a gen-

erous draft through them. The liquid went down with one or two gulps and chokings.

Tap! tap! tap! sounded faintly on one of the windows.

With a half-stifled cry of delight, Blanche flew to the curtain, pulling it aside.

A laughing Saxon face appeared there, the fair-skinned face of a young man of twenty-five, crowned by a carefully trimmed mass of gold-brown hair. If Blanche looked a Saxon goddess, he was the god!

"Philip—Philip Darrell!" cried Blanche joyously.

"Is the coast clear?" called the young man through the pane.

"Yes, yes! Come in—come quickly!"

Prince Charming? Lest any one be deceived, let me say that he was not. But Prince of Happiness he had been in this girl's life. Here was the mystery solved of Blanche's secret schooling, of the yearning glimpses of a higher life. Phil had found her. He and his mother had befriended her, helped her—had been glad to see her in their luxurious home on the Heights. Never had girl safer and truer friends, all unknown to crafty, suspicious Luke Strull. And whenever Blanche's visits were far between, Phil sooner or later came to her to see if there were aught amiss.

"Oh, Mr. Darrell——" began Blanche, placing her hand in his.

"Phil!" he interrupted merrily. "Never be formal with me."

"I never was more glad to see you, Phil," went on the beaming girl rapidly. "Come!"

Still holding his hand, she led him toward the door of the inner room.

"You are a doctor," pleaded Blanche.

"They called me one at the university," he laughed. "Fortunately for humanity, I never needed to practice."

"But you must now! There is a life at stake. Come!"

Wondering, Phil submitted to being led into the room. He caught sight of the figure on the bed and went over there with brisker step.

"Whew!" he whistled solemnly. "Where did you——"

"The river," broke in Blanche. "Less than an hour ago. See the cruel line on her throat. But she still lives."

"True—a slender, frayed, fragile thread of life," answered Phil, placing his ear against the still one's heart.

He asked questions rapidly, Blanche eagerly answering them.

"Bring me half a glass of water," directed Darrell. When he received it, he drew out a pocket case, selected a phial, and from it poured a few drops into the water. Raising the head and shoulders of the unconscious girl, he poured the liquid down her throat.

"There is a chance," he announced. "In ten minutes I shall know whether we can save her life. At the best, I fear a long illness, delirium, fever."

He sat on the edge of the bed, physician fashion, holding one limp wrist at the pulse, gazing earnestly at the inert face.

"You seem lost in contemplation," murmured Blanche, touching him softly on the shoulder.

"I was," he frankly admitted. "I should not soon tire of looking at this face. I have seen many beautiful ones, but none like this."

Now, Blanche might have known, had there been any doubt before, that Phil Darrell was not Prince Charming for her. Not a spark of envy or jealousy glowed in her heart at hearing his praise of the other woman.

"Phil," whispered the river waif, gazing down at the face of marble, "I feel that I should love her if I knew her."

"I'm sure I should," admitted the young man, half aloud. Then, flushing quickly, he rose with an embarrassed laugh.

"Nonsense! I'm too sentimental. Talking like a schoolboy, eh, Blanche? Now I'm going out of the room. I want you to undress our unknown and get her into your bed. Those soaking garments are enough to cause the poor girl's death."

Just a few minutes later Darrell, sitting musing on a water-logged packing box, heard the door open, and Blanche whisper:

"You may come in now."

The unknown was moaning lightly, though still almost motionless. Her glossy black hair made a sharp contrast with the snowy pillow. The face was as marble-white as ever, the eyes still closed.

One hand lay outside the coverlet. As Phil Darrell reverently raised it in his to note the pulse, he quivered with a distinctly unprofessional thrill.

What queer force had assailed him? Phil had never felt such an overmastering sensation before. To hide it, to down it, he turned to Blanche, saying:

"All right so far. We can do nothing for the next hour but watch."

"There has been an attempt at murder," began Blanche hesitatingly. "Do you think we ought to—to notify the police?"

"By Jove, yes!" muttered Phil, his face darkening. "The scoundrels must be caught and punished as they deserve. I'd feel like a guilty scoundrel myself if I let them get away. The police—no! Blanche, I've an inspiration. There is a sleuth whom the wiliest cannot escape—the greatest detective in New York—in America—in the world! A giant in penetration, amid a race of pigmies!"

It was unheard of to see Phil Darrell's face so transfigured with enthusiasm. Blanche herself caught the spirit of it.

"Who is he?"

"Men call him Allan King Nelson, though none know if that be his true name. Criminals fear him more than they would Beelzebub, and they call him "the King"—King Nelson. If a bank is robbed, without seeming clew, he is likely to have thieves and booty within three days. A case like this would be pastime for 'the King'!"

"But this young woman herself, if she recovers, may tell us all," declared Blanche.

"Not in weeks," declared Phil. "After her shock, fever will develop. Remain with her. She does not need me just now. I am going to telephone to Nelson!"

Snatching up his hat, Phil bounded out of the old cabin. It was a half hour later when he returned. His first glance was at the unknown, whose condition had scarcely changed. Then:

"It's all right," blurted out Phil. "Nelson was at home, disengaged, and is now on his way here. Whatever there is of mystery here will be clear as daylight to his great mind."

Saying which, Phil busied himself with temperature-taking, pulse-feeling, and the like for some minutes.

Blanche hovered in the background silent, observant, dreading her father's premature return.

"It is strange I have never heard of this great detective," she remarked, when Phil at last turned to her again.

"Not at all strange," promptly negatived Phil. "He does not seek notoriety. He never takes a case that is to be exploited in the newspapers. His favorite way of working, I am told, is to remain in the background, the silent, active brain of ruthless discovery. Few of the criminals, they say, who go down before his skill, ever remember to have seen him. King Nelson——"

"Is here," announced a mild voice from the doorway.

So utterly unexpected was the announcement that it made both hearers jump.

CHAPTER III.

KING NELSON AT WORK.

King Nelson stood in the doorway. He was a man of apparently from thirty-five to thirty-eight years, though his age was hard to guess.

Of a height of five feet eight, his weight might be placed at one hundred and eighty pounds, though he gave no evidence of pudgy stoutness. Great breadth from shoulder to shoulder caused his appearance of more than ordinary size.

His eyes were blue, hair a dark shade of brown. His attire, a suit of gray tweed, topcoat of light-colored covert cloth, derby hat, and thick-soled russet shoes, gave him the ordinary appearance of a tolerably prosperous man in New York's wholesale district.

As for his eyes, which looked out upon the world through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, they were mild, soft, benevolent.

In a word, King Nelson was a disappointment to those who believed in the detective of mere sensational romance.

At the moment of his dramatic announcement he smiled benignly upon the startled pair.

"You are Mr. Darrell," he said, in a low, easy voice. "I remember you. We met once, six months ago."

"And you remember me after that one meeting?" cried Phil.

"Once I see a man's face, and hear his name, I never forget either," was the indifferent answer, as the detective stepped slowly into the room. "Why should I not remember you, since you remember me?"

"But you are the first, the greatest in your profession," protested Phil. "I could hardly forget you."

"While I recollect you as one who modestly refused the title of doctor, yet you are a man better qualified to practice than nine-tenths of the physicians who hang out signs."

With which words, uttered in a tone of perfect sincerity, the great detective stepped over to the bed, intently regarding the unconscious form of the girl rescued from the river.

"This is the case?" murmured Nelson interrogatively.

"Yes."

"And to whom do I owe my engagement in this matter?"

"I sent for you," answered Phil. "As to my financial standing——"

"I know all about that," was the quiet answer. "Now, tell me all that you know about this young woman."

Phil glanced significantly at Blanche. The latter narrated all that she knew, omitting her father's baser conduct. All the while King Nelson kept his gaze upon Darrell's patient.

When Blanche had finished, the young man took up the recital. He had little to add.

King Nelson remained silent for some moments afterward.

"What do you wish me to do?" he inquired, at length, still without looking up.

"There has been a foul attempt at murder——" Phil impetuously began.

"Undoubtedly."

"Find the scoundrels! Punish them! Find the unfortunate girl's friends—she may not be able to help us for weeks. Restore her to her friends."

"And what," inquired King Nelson, turning and intently surveying young Darrell, "is your interest in all this?"

So searching, penetrating was the detective's gaze, that Phil's face instantly became the color of fire.

"Let me put my question in other words," went on Nelson, in his mildest manner. "Do you know anything whatever about this young woman?"

"Nothing."

"Or her would-be murderers?"

"Would to God that I did!" exclaimed Phil, in a voice so earnest as to carry conviction even to the detective's mind.

King Nelson asked no more. He had solved the reason which, even to Phil, was not yet even clear.

Blanche, too, guessed it.

"Let me see the young woman's clothing—all belongings that were found upon her," requested Nelson.

Blanche brought them, placed them upon the bed. The detective regarded them for so long a while, and with such absorption, that the two young people stole out in the next room, afraid to interrupt his reverie.

Ten minutes had gone by, when King Nelson, raising his head, announced:

"You may come in."

Phil entered first with Blanche just behind him.

King Nelson seemed far away, in a deep brown study.

"I am afraid," began the young man, "this is an unsatisfactory case for you."

"How so?" interrogated the detective, rousing and gazing keenly at the other.

"In the first place, there are no clews."

"No clews?" repeated King Nelson, in a tone of mild surprise. "On the contrary, I find an abundance of them."

"An abundance?" repeated Phil bewilderedly.

"One private word in your ear," rejoined the detective, looking at Blanche, who retreated beyond the door.

"Well?" breathed Phil, inclining his head before the other man's.

"Is this girl—this river fisher's daughter—to be trusted?"

"As much so as the angel of truth!" came the fervent answer.

"And her silence?"

"I can answer for it."

The detective's next glance brought Blanche back into the room.

"For the start," began King Nelson, speaking slowly, "this affair is a simple one. An attempt was made to murder our unknown unfortunate between three and five o'clock this morning."

Phil stared in undisguised amazement.

"I do not follow you," he murmured.

"It is simple enough," resumed the detective. "Between those hours human vitality is at its lowest. One engaged in the struggle for life would, between three and five a. m., soonest show the signs of utter collapse—death. In fact, at the time of the early morning, only a brute ignorant of the science of his attempted crime would resort to strangling. If alarmed, he stops at the first signs of death, his victim will have some chance of resuscitation."

"You must be right," murmured Phil, though dubiously.

"I am certain that I am," was the calm answer. "I am not speaking from guesswork, but from observation in many criminal problems."

"Go on."

"The attempt was made from a boat—yacht—some craft."

"That is likely, since the girl was found in the river."

"I do not speak from so slight grounds," rejoined King Nelson, rather severely. "Observe!"

He presented to the gaze of his two listeners the skirt from the nearly drowned girl.

"You see here two streaks of paint—one of a greenish color, the broader one of white."

To Phil and Blanche these signs were dim, indeed, but to King Nelson's practiced eyes they were legible as the lines of a printed book. He went on, with some impatience:

"The body of the supposed dead woman was rolled overboard, one of the would-be murderers working faster than the other. Thus the paint of the boat became rubbed on the skirt. That boat had a green gunwale, a white body."

"Why may not the paint marks come from some other cause?" demanded Phil.

"They did not," responded the detective emphatically. "The gunwale projects out over the side of the boat. Do you notice that the green streak is more pronounced than the white? And here, in the broad white streak, is a faint line. That was made by the seam between two planks. Place your finger on the cloth here"—holding up the skirt—"do you feel the stickiness of the pitch used to calk the seam?"

Phil nodded, then gazed wonderingly at the detective.

"There were two men concerned in the attempt," continued King Nelson, without hesitation. "One of them was well dressed. Probably the world calls him a gentleman. He seized her from behind, there was a struggle."

Taking up the discarded waist, the detective pointed to two ornamental buttons on the back of it. From around one he picked off a tiny black thread.

"Broadcloth fiber," he explained. "In the struggle, the coat of the man who seized her from behind became entangled on the button—slightly, but enough to wrench away the thread. Does a poor man wear broadcloth? But this scoundrel merely held her. It was the one who stood in front of her who applied the almost fatal pressure to her throat."

"At this rate," gasped Darrell, "you will soon tell me the names of the dastards."

"I can tell you the name of one of them," returned Nelson composedly. "Come closer to the bed. Bend over our patient—so. Examine the marks on her throat—the thumb print on the left side, the finger marks on the right side. Examine the finger marks with especial care. You are a physician, an anatomist. Do you notice by the marks that the second finger was but a stump—that the bone protruded at the end?"

"No," said Darrell.

With the utmost patience, King Nelson drew a magnifying lens from one of his pockets, moving it slowly over the prints on the unconscious girl's throat.

"By Heaven, yes, I see it now!" quivered Darrell.

"Among the criminals of New York," resumed the detective, "I know of but one whose second finger of his left hand is so marked. He is left-handed, and had the tip of his finger shot away three years ago while resisting a policeman. He is known as Stump-fingered Ike Crawford. It was Crawford, to a certainty, who choked the girl. Through him we must find his confederate—doubtless his employer. As to the motive for the crime, I cannot decide. The overlooking of this money and jewelry would seem to bar robbery."

"Do you—have you—does anything point to where we must look for this unhappy girl's home or friends?" queried Darrell, his head in a whirl from the rapidity and clearness of King Nelson's reasoning.

"Ah, yes; of that we have one of the best possible clews. Here!"

Phil received and examined a slip of printed paper taken from the unknown's purse.

"I see nothing to help us," confessed the young man. "On one side of the paper is a cooking recipe, on the other a notice of a fair at Mount Hope Church. No town—no name to guide us, and there must be hundreds of Mount Hope churches in the country."

"Look at the slip again," advised the detective. "The column is fourteen ems wide—an unusual width. We have to find a newspaper printed in that width, on that texture of paper, that face of type, that grade of ink. Bah! The task is easy. That town or city must have a Mount Hope church. Once we have found the town, we shall know where to start on the track of the girl's friends. If I can find Crawford, and make him talk, the task will be easier. Well, we are ready to start."

"My patient," muttered Phil, turning guiltily toward the bed. "I had forgotten her."

"No matter," was the answer. "I have treated her. She is fit to travel gently."

"What! You a physician?" uttered Darrell.

"Oh, yes! just as I am a surveyor, a lawyer, a chemist, a steam engineer—a number of things. The true detective must be all kinds of a man. Now we will leave the room, Darrell. Miss Strull will dress our mysterious young woman. You will wait in the next room. I will summon my car, which is waiting near here. I shall convey our unknown to my own house, where, under my housekeeper, the poor girl will have the most excellent care."

"Take me with you," urged Darrell, in a whisper, as the two men closed the door of the room behind them. "Let me help you to the finish."

"Do you hold life so cheaply?" asked King Nelson sharply. "For I tell you frankly we are after murderers of no ordinary caliber. You would stake your life at every step."

"Fear not for me—I pledge my life."

"A question! Answer me honestly, as you would have my friendship. Have you fallen in love with this unknown girl?"

"By Heaven, yes!" confessed Phil huskily.

"One more question: If I take you, will you obey me in everything?"

"Implicitly—unquestioningly."

"Come on, then."

"It is fate!" murmured Phil Darrell, trembling with emotion.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BAITING A TIGER.

A correspondent send an account of his experience in killing a tiger. He was traveling through India on official business, and in one of the villages heard of a tiger that committed nightly depredations. He bought a calf for bait, and the natives took it to a point outside the village, and fastened it to a stake under a convenient tree, where a branch some twenty feet from the ground hung over it.

"Just before night," he says, "armed with two rifles and two pistols, all the firearms I had with me, I established myself alone on that branch. I did not even take my one servant with me. He would only have fallen asleep and tumbled to the ground.

"Quietly I prepared for business. I hung my ammunition belt over the limb, where I could reach it easily. My pistol belt I hung beside it, with one pistol on each side, so that I could lay my hand on either instantly. One rifle I balanced against the tree, and, as there was no place for the other, I held it in my hand.

"All was ready, and I waited patiently. An hour went by, and the moon rose, making it almost as light as day. I could see everything—everything except the tiger.

"I had chosen this spot, as there was a spring not far from the tree, and the first thing the tiger would look for after lying all day in the jungle, would be a drink of water. If he came there to drink, he was sure to hear and see the calf, and make for it at once.

"Between the tree and the spring stood a cluster of low shrubs. Beyond the spring there was open country, and then the jungle whence I supposed the tiger must come. I had not taken my eyes from it, but though I could see the jackals on the edge of the jungle, there was no tiger.

"Another hour went by. I was growing sleepy, and, seeing no danger, I went to the spring for a drink, carrying my rifle. I was slowly walking back to the tree, when the struggles of the calf attracted my attention. It was making a most peculiar noise, and a low growl came from the bushes between me and the tree. If blood can run cold, I am sure mine did at that moment. There I stood, in the open plain, with just one shot at my command, and a tiger between me and my only refuge.

"He had evidently been there for some time. He had seen me in the tree, and had been waiting for me to go before he dared to touch the calf. If he was growling, now, at the calf, preparing for a meal, there was hope for me; but if he was growling at my coming back, it meant that he was ready to spring upon me, and there was not one atom of hope.

"I did not dare to move. The calf kept up its crying, and the low, ominous growl never ceased. Then each noise grew a little more emphatic, and it was evident that between us two the tiger had decided on the calf. A little later, and I saw his huge form moving stealthily toward the tree. He was evidently afraid of some trick, and was investigating.

"I did not move till he made the leap. Then I hurried up behind the bushes, and could see him crouching over the poor calf, drinking its blood. It was impossible for me to reach the tree. Now, if ever, was my chance. One shot must do the work. I aimed at his head, and fired.

"I saw him loose his hold, heard him give one savage yelp, and then, to my horror, saw him turn, gnashing his teeth furiously, and come creeping toward the bushes.

"I sank down on my knees to get as much shelter as possible, and waited for what seemed as sure a death as ever faced man. But the growling subsided into a hoarse breathing. Was the tiger dying? I cautiously rose till I could see through the upper branches. Two bright yellow eyes, like fireballs, and a sharp growl sent me to my knees again.

"The tiger is a coward, and slow to spring upon what he cannot see. He is naturally patient also, and for the present I dared not to be otherwise than patient. So we waited. The rough ground tortured my knees till I thought I would almost rather die than bear the pain any longer. Then the breeze would stir the leaves, and a low growl would convince me that I had better bear it a little longer, after all.

"It was a long time before I dared to risk another look. There was nothing there! I crept from my hiding place. The calf lay dead beneath the tree. The next moment I saw the tiger, almost halfway to the jungle, lying stone-dead upon the ground."

WESTERN AMERICAN DUELS.

The reata duel is not a new thing on the Mexican frontier. Indeed, there is hardly a big cattle ranch anywhere that has not its stories of hard fights with the lasso. Such duels are bound to be fierce. But so skillful and quick do these rope throwers become that such a duel not unfrequently lasts for hours.

Probably the best remembered fight of this sort was that between a Texan known as "Kid" Long and a little Mexican, who was only spoken of as "Gabilan"—hawk. They circled round each other, dodging the rapid throws, from ten in the morning until after sunset.

When the horses had almost given out, the Texan threw at his adversary, who threw back so that his noose passed right over the other man's lasso and hand, and caught him fair round the neck and under the armpit.

In almost no time Kid was out of his saddle and being dragged over the ground at a rate that knocked the life out of him before he had gone a hundred yards.

The West, during its wild and woolly days, and the Mexican frontier have had many remarkable duels. That between "Farmer" Peel and a soldier, near one of the forts in Utah, is among the classics of the field of honor—or what has answered for that in the cow towns and mining camps. The weapons were rifles, revolvers, and bowie knives.

The principals were placed on opposite sides of a hillock, round which ran a road, and started to meet. The curve of the hill prevented them seeing one another until they were within a hundred yards.

As soon as they saw one another they both fired.

Though part of the rim of Peel's hat was cut off and the soldier's sleeve was pierced, neither was hurt.

Then they pulled their pistols and advanced, firing. Both dropped, badly wounded, when less than twenty yards separated them. They lay there squirming and shooting until both had emptied their weapons.

Peel was desperately hurt, and his adversary had one ball through the chest and several others distributed all over his anatomy. When they could shoot no more they lay still for a short time.

Then Peel, who was so badly hurt that he could not advance even on his hands and knees, began to wriggle toward the fallen soldier. He pulled himself along with his elbows, and with his one uninjured hand finished the soldier with his bowie knife.

A little blind cañon in the Sierra Madre, used to furnish the Apaches with the means of formally settling their disputes.

This gulch is fairly alive with rattlesnakes. When two bucks had a quarrel that they did not wish to settle offhand, they repaired to this gully, and while the remainder of the tribe stood round and watched from the hills on either side, the combatants went together to where the serpents were thickest.

There, stark naked, and weaponless, they would wrestle. This would wake up every rattler in the glen. The aim of each was to force the other onto the angry snakes. It was not unusual for both to be bitten while they struggled and rolled among the rocks. Each was bound to remain, and wrestle as long as his adversary had life or strength enough to struggle with him.

LUNG GYMNASTICS.

Air is to the lungs what food is to the stomach. Its importance may be judged from the fact that a healthy human being requires sixty-six gallons of air per hour.

In the first place, it is wrong to draw the breath through the mouth. The nose is the natural avenue to the lungs. In the nose are provided cavities in which the air is warmed before it comes to the lungs. We all commit a great fault by not breathing with force.

We must breathe so forcefully that the chest moves up and down, or visibly expands and contracts.

After a long or deep breath one ought to hold that breath for an instant before it is blown out again. By holding the breath the air comes to act on the whole surface of the blood, nourishing and removing the impure gases. The lungs must be perfectly emptied before being refilled, and that can only be done by forceful breathing.

The exercise should always be taken in free, fresh, and pure air, or at least before an open window. Five minutes' exercise every day will do wonders for a healthy person.

CARPENTERING IN JAPAN.

Japanese carpenters are ingenious workmen, and their work is done with marvelous neatness. A curious feature of their homes is that they do not contain a nail, all the joints and timbers being dovetailed together by many ingenious devices; and the whole of the work, even to the rafters, is as smooth as if it had been polished down with sandpaper.

And the Japanese are a neat people, for they use no paint to hide any blemish of construction or ornamentation; no filigree work or plaster of Paris gewgaws; but every stick in the building is exposed. Every morning, as regularly as she cooks the breakfast, or sweeps the floor, the Japanese housewife takes a wet cloth and scours the whole interior of the dwelling, leaving no part untouched, and no stains or dirt spots to mar its cleanly appearance.

Then the Japanese do not come into the house with muddy boots, but, having covered the floor with neat matting, always remove their dirty sandals before stepping upon it. It is interesting to watch the Japanese carpenters at their work, and the peculiarity of their movements. The Japanese carpenter works toward him—that is, instead of shoving a plane upon the board at arm's length, he pulls it toward him; and he cuts, saws, and chops in the same way.

His saws are fixed in handles like a butcher's cleaver, and the teeth slant toward the handle. The planes are constructed like ours, but the wooden portion is very thin and wide. The adze is fastened to the end of a hooped stick; yet although their tools are different to ours, they are neither awkward in appearance, or awkwardly handled.

RESTORING FADED PHOTOGRAPHS.

The only plan for restoring faded photographs, or, rather, removing the yellow tint, is by placing the print in a ten-grain solution of bichloride of mercury in water, and washing. There are faded and faded prints; some may be improved by this method, and some not. If the detail has absolutely gone, no kind of known treatment will restore it; but if the print has yellowed, and traces of half tone remain, the mercury treatment will very much improve it by destroying the yellowness that partly obliterates the shading—thus giving it greater contrast between the lights and shadows, and rendering it more suitable for copying.

LIFE-SHORTENING OCCUPATIONS.

One of the curious features of modern life is the extent to which the most hazardous trades are overrun by applicants for work. The electric-light companies never find and difficulty in obtaining all the linemen they need, notwithstanding the fact that the dangers of that kind of business have been demonstrated times without number. The men who work in factories where wall paper is made frequently joke one another over the tradition that a man's life, in this trade, is shortened ten years.

A similar belief is prevalent in factories where leather papers are made, and among men who have to handle them, and whose lungs are said to become impeded by inhaling the dust arising from such papers. In certain other factories, where brass ornaments and fittings are made, the air is laden with very fine brazen particles, which are, when inhaled, especially irritating to the lungs.

But one of the most singular advertised calls for employees that was ever printed appeared recently, signed by a firm engaged in the business of building towers. It called for applicants only among those who are young, strong, and courageous, and closed by saying:

"We warn all seekers for this job that it is of the most dangerous nature, and that few men continue in it more than a few years. In fact, it is almost certain death to the workman who follows this occupation."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Texas Rangers on Mexican Border.

The entire force of Texas Rangers has been assigned to duty on 800 miles of Texas-Mexico border. Once there were more than a thousand of the rangers, now they have dwindled to a mere handful, but along the Rio Grande it is said that one ranger is equal to ten other men. They never fear superior forces. That is the way they have been brought up. Many of them are direct descendants of the men who fought with Mexico in 1832, when Texas won its independence. A Texas Ranger never wounds a man—he shoots to kill.

With the news of the rangers' disposition along the border, Governor Colquitt made public a long list of Texas border troubles on which his appeals for more power to protect the boundary have been based and which explain the nature of the rangers' activity. Ranches and stores and granaries and banks have been plundered by Mexicans. Most of the Americans who have been killed or outraged in Mexico have been citizens of Texas or other border States.

Following the public declaration of Governor Colquitt that he would find a way to protect Texas citizens, President Wilson caused the war department to increase the United States border patrol by two regiments of infantry, these being sent to Laredo and Eagle Pass. The attitude of the governor was not alone responsible for the increasing of the border patrol, however.

"I defy any authority on the face of the earth to prevent me from protecting our citizens," declared Colquitt, in announcing his intention of increasing the forces of Texas Rangers.

In order for the government to completely patrol the border it would be necessary to have many more soldiers there—a solid line of men.

Family's Sad Plight.

Mrs. Margaret Davis, wife of a laborer, and eight of her children, ranging in age from 3 to 18, are all stricken with the terrible disease which men call the great white plague, but which is really the blackest plague and the greatest shame of the human race because it is the result of poverty.

The poverty of the Davis family forced the girls and boys into child slavery. And that unholy slavery rushed mother and children into consumption. Doctors are inclined to think that two or three of the nine may live.

The Davis children started to work for a living when they were fourteen years of age. The father and these children, all working to maintain the little home in Dickson City, Pa., got $60 a month.

Two boys, Ralph and Joseph, worked in a coal mine, one as breaker boy.

The oldest girl, Helen, was employed in a silk mill. Working ten hours a day she got $4.50 a week.

The windows of that silk mill were always closed so that the ends of silk might not be blown about and injured. From the basement great vats full of dye sent up foul fumes all day long. In that vile, overheated air on long hot afternoons frail young girls bent frantically over the whirring looms, and no matter how faint or tired they were, no matter what the temperature, they kept on working with the windows closed.

One girl who sat next to little Helen Davis had a cough. And after two years of work beside her Helen Davis, too, had a cough. And soon the cough had spread through the entire Davis family—even to the father, who refused to go to Mont Alto and continues at his work, and to the three-year-old baby, Richard, who was too young to be taken along. The two boys who worked, one down in the mine, the other on the coal breaker, coughed a little worse than the others. One boy thought the cough was due to the damp air of the mine, the other to the coal dust from the breaker.

Wild Dogs Tree Man and Kill 142 Goats.

A pack of wild dogs, so ferocious that they attack men, has been terrorizing the residents in the Eloree section of South Carolina. A herd of 150 goats pastured in an isolated section was attacked by the dogs, and all but eight were killed. The owner of the goats, while examining their bodies, was attacked and forced to take refuge in a tree.

Ten-hour Work Law Valid.

The ten-hour labor law of Massachusetts was upheld as constitutional recently by the United States supreme court. This law, passed in 1909, limited the hours of minors and women in manufacturing and mechanical establishments to fifty-six a week—ten hours a day, with certain qualifications. The State in 1911 reduced the hours from fifty-six to fifty-four, but the latter law was not in question in the case decided.

In the present case Richard G. Riley, superintendent of the Davol Mills, in Fall River, charged with violating the statute, attacked the constitutionality of the law. Riley was convicted of requiring a woman to work five minutes over ten hours. Counsel for Riley alleged that the act was arbitrary and unreasonable. The State's case was argued by ex-Attorney General James M. Swift.

Snake's Strange Hiding Place.

As a clerk in an Ames, Iowa, grocery grasped a fresh stalk of bananas to cut a dozen off, a bewra, a snake more than two feet long, stuck its head out of the stalk and struck at the horrified youth.

Other clerks came to his assistance with knives, and while the snake was trying to get at him one of them managed to inflict a fatal wound.

A Mexican student in the State Agricultural college, who was called to examine the reptile, said the bewra is one of the deadliest of the poisonous snakes. The store will offer the specimen to the zoölogical professors at the college.

Use for Great Salt Lake.

Experts of the government forest service have discovered that the waters of Great Salt Lake, Utah, act as a preservative against decay in timbers. For years they have been conducting experiments to find a treatment that would preserve telegraph poles and railroad ties.

As the result of recent investigations it has been found that timbers taken from the Great Salt Lake were perfectly sound, although they had remained in those waters for many years.

Forest experts suggest that ties and poles immersed in these waters ought to be impervious to decay if the salt is not bleached out by the action of the elements. This can be guarded against, it is asserted, by painting the butt of pole with creosote, which will keep out the moisture and keep in the salt.

Raises Potatoes in Winter.

E. C. Decker, of Lock Haven, Pa., has raised a crop of potatoes in the winter time, but he did it by accident. Last fall he threw some potatoes in an old cellar. They sprouted and took root in the drift of the floor, and a few weeks later he discovered more than a bushel of new potatoes, all as large or larger than hen's eggs.

Lizard in Stomach Five Years.

Doctor O. Gray, of Kellogg, Idaho, recently extracted a lizard from the stomach of William Boyle, of Wallace, Idaho, who has been ill for five years. Doctors had diagnosed his ailment as stomach trouble, gall stones, liver trouble, and Bright's disease. The lizard was four inches long and alive. It is thought it hatched from an egg which had been swallowed in drinking water. Boyle is recovering.

Lightning Cures Two Ailments.

That he was cured of an attack of rheumatism by the shock of a bolt of lightning which struck very close to him a short time ago, is the statement of George Partlow, of Shelby, Mich. Previous to his narrow escape from death by lightning, Partlow was crippled not only by rheumatism, but by the effects of a paralytic stroke. Now he is apparently cured.

Oil Burner Takes Record.

The freighter *Santa Cruz* steamed into port at San Francisco, Cal., from New York with what Captain A. Watson said was a new record for the passage via the Straits of Magellan. From the time the vessel left Sandy Hook until she slowed down off Los Angeles harbor, the engines were run full speed without a stop. The distance is approximately 13,000 miles, and the time consumed was 47 days and 4 hours.

The *Santa Cruz* is an oil burner and did not need to put in at any port for fuel.

Odd Facts About Animals.

Most animals make poor sailors. Horses and tigers suffer most of all; they whine pitifully, and their eyes water continually. Elephants, too, suffer greatly. When the elephant falls seasick, a bucket of fresh water, containing seven ounces of quinine and three and one-half pints of whisky, is supplied.

Birds delight in sea voyages. Recently a number of English songbirds, such as the lark and robin, were dispatched to British Columbia.

The polar bear, too, enjoys a sea journey. He is described as very gay while on board ship.

Scientists assert that young crocodiles, just before they are ready to hatch, utter a croaking cry within the eggs which can be heard though the eggs be buried some distance under the sand. Doctor W. A. Lamborn recently tested the fact at Lagos, on the West African coast. He heard a croaking noise from below a dry path, and, digging in the path to investigate the cause, he discovered thirteen crocodile eggs at a depth of about eighteen inches. All the young crocodiles hatched out within half an hour of being dug up.

The wings of bats are merely hands. The fingers are very long and joined by a membrane similar to that of a duck's foot, only thinner. This membrance is extended up the arm, along the body, and down to the legs and tail. The thumb is very short and its nail is extended to form a hook or claw.

England's Strange Problem.

Great Britain has never been confronted with a stranger problem than which has been brought about by the refusal of the Ulster counties of Ireland to accept home rule.

The opponents of home rule are only slightly in the majority in Ulster. The others, like the rest of the men of Ireland, are eager to get the legislative independence from Great Britain for which there has been so long a struggle. In the past thousands of men were imprisoned, hundreds were exiled, in the efforts of the British Parliament to stamp out the home-rule movement. Now all is changed. The home-rule dream is close to realization, and the British army is held ready to take the field against the defiant Ulsterites, to fight for the liberty of Ireland!

The Unionists of Ulster, as the antihome-rule forces are known, claim to have 110,000 volunteers ready to resist the king's troops. These Unionists are trained and tried riflemen. The activity in organizing them caused the British government to rush reënforcements of infantry to strengthen the garrisons in Ulster. Many officers ordered to serve in Ireland have resigned their commissions rather than bear arms against the Ulsterites. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Bailey, commanding the Fourth Huzzars, "The Queen's Own," is one of several high officers who resigned.

A Remarkable Ball Player.

Walter Johnson, the great pitcher, of the Washington American League team, whom money could not buy, is a remarkable ball player, not only on account of his achievements on the ball field, but also on account of his likes and dislikes. As soon as the ball season is over he hikes straight for his farm, near Coffeyville, Kan., and there he remains until the call comes for spring training the following year.

The bright lights of the city do not appeal to the modest baseball star, who declares he sees more than enough of them during the summer months. Instead, he loves his farm and coon hunting. "I would rather hunt coons than do anything else in the world, except pitch balls over the home plate in Washington," he says.

"I like the freedom of farm life. Other ball players spend their winters in cities and I come to the country. When we go into camp for spring training I notice that the boys who spend their winters in town usually lose weight and soon fatigue while I begin to gain weight the first day and do not lose any at all in training. I hunt coons, milk cows, eat heartily, go to bed early, and get up with the sun. Then I am always in condition."

Johnson and his father are practical farmers, but not

on a large scale. They own 160 acres only. Among the modern improvements is a 100-ton silo, built of reënforced concrete. It almost paid for itself following the Kansas drought last summer. A herd of eight high-bred registered Holstein cows, averaging six gallons of milk each per day, and a flock of White Orpington chickens are Johnson's favorites.

A Good Excuse.

Treed by a dog and with two frightened cats clinging to his back, Worden Dowe had a good excuse for being late to school. After he had thus kept his pupils for a half hour, a passer-by rescued him by chasing the dog away.

The cats raced past Dowe as he was walking down the road on the way to the schoolhouse. They were looking for a place of refuge, and, seeing no other, they returned and mounted the teacher's back. In the meantime the pursuing dog arrived. He was a fierce one, so Dowe hurriedly took to a tree. There he remained, with the cats hanging to him, until the dog was forced to leave.

Opposed to Four-mile Races.

Doctor J. Duncan Spaeth, coach of the Princeton crews, is opposed to the four-mile race for college crews. He says in a statement to the *Princetonian:*

"I have always been opposed to the four-mile race for Princeton. There may be less harm in the longer race for those colleges which can practice for the full distance on their home course, but I do not believe in spending so much time and money to send crews away for practice. I do not object so much to the length of the race itself as I do to the training necessary to put the men in shape for it.

"Four miles is no harder on the men than two if they have been properly trained, but to prepare a crew for four miles necessitates putting them through more mileage under strain and is thus apt to overdevelop them. They are frequently made to suffer for this in after years; also it requires much more time to prepare for the longer contests and tends to intrude too much on the regular work of the college. If anything, it overemphasizes the business of training and tends to make a grind out of what ought to be a recreation."

Jesse Pomeroy Freed from "Solitary" Cell.

Jesse Pomeroy, who has not seen a man, except his jailers, for thirty-eight years, and who has been deprived of the sight of all worldly things during that time, is soon to be treated as other prisoners. He is to be released from solitary confinement in the Charlestown, Mass., prison.

Pomeroy, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of two children when he was a boy, probably is the most widely known of all life-term prisoners in the United States. While prison officials are now willing to give him the privileges of other convicts, no effort is being made to get a pardon for him.

A New Kind of Fire Bell.

Modern invention has provided a substitute for the old-time fire bell. It is a large horn, which emits a sound resembling that of a "hooter" automobile horn, only much louder. The horn is connected with an electric instrument, a special form of telephone receiver usually operated by current supplied from a central station. A series of blasts sufficient to arouse a town is produced when the current is sent through the coils. The mechanism is so arranged that the alarm can be operated by the current of a lighting or power circuit, or even a battery of dry or wet cells. In small towns horns are placed in the homes of members of the fire department. The alarm is started by pushing the button in an annunciator, any number of which are located as desired. A switchboard at the central station shows the place from which the alarm was turned in.

The horn-alarm system has been adopted by a number of towns where the fire signal was usually given by the whistle of the lighting plant or by one bell.

Cow Gets Back Seat if this Goes Well.

After years of experimenting in his laboratory, a scientist has just announced that he has accomplished the production of artificial milk. He says he has manufactured pure, wholesome milk from a basis of casein obtained from the soy bean. This bean has heretofore been used mainly in the manufacture of oil soap, cattle cakes, et cetera. It is said that the success of artificial milk is proved by the fact that excellent cheese and butter can be made from it. However, the invention has not been given full test, and it probably will be some time before the cow ceases to be one of our best friends.

Largest Building of Wood.

The Machinery Palace, the first structure to be completed for the Panama-Pacific Exposition, at San Francisco, Cal., is the largest building ever constructed entirely of wood. Its outside dimensions are 368 by 968 feet; its greatest height is 135 feet, while its average height is 103 feet. This building, costing $659,665, has an area of 369,000 square feet, and a volume of 38,000,000 cubic feet, and it is to be placed at the disposal of the machinery manufacturers of the world for the free housing of their exhibits during the nine months in which the people of the world hold festival in San Francisco.

Baldwin to Build New Type Dirigibles.

An important event in aëronautics occurred recently when Captain Thomas S. Baldwin, who has sailed the air for forty-two years, signed a three-year contract as chief constructor for the Connecticut Aircraft Company, of New Haven. Captain Baldwin never before was under contract since the beginning of his aërial career, and said that the relief from responsibility was welcome to a man in his sixty-third year. He will retain his aviation field at Staten Island.

The Connecticut Aircraft Company was incorporated two years ago, and has done some work in aëroplanes. It has been acquiring manufacturing properties and aviation grounds, as well as 173 patents on contrivances connected with aëroplanes and balloons. The company owns a five-story building and an aërodrome in New Haven, and recently purchased the field at College Park, Md., where the United States army flyers were formerly trained.

The concern has a paid-up capital of $500,000, and the officers are as follows: Colonel Isaac Ullman, ex-Governor Woodruff, of Connecticut; Samuel C. Moorhouse, Grahame Thompson, and Everard Thompson.

Captain Baldwin said the company would build a dirigible balloon of the nonrigid type, which would be

finished by July 15. It will carry five passengers, and will make trips between New York and Albany during the summer, under the management of the company. There will be no regular schedule.

If the first balloon is successful, six more will be constructed, which will be sold for military or private use. Each craft will be 160 feet long, equipped with a 100-horse-power motor, and will be capable of making 40 miles an hour.

A factory with 15,000 feet of floor space, at Bound Brook, N. J., was leased by the Sloane Aëroplane Company, for the purpose of manufacturing aëronautical and marine motors. At the new factory, which will be operated by the newly formed Sloane-Daniel Company, motors with from 80 to 200 horse power are to be built. Paul Daniel, formerly of the Edison Company, will be chief designer.

Lieutenant S. Korsakhoff, of the Russian Army Reserve, who is in this country, said that he has been commissioned by the Russian government to investigate aviation in the United States, and to purchase two flying boats from the Curtiss Aëroplane Company. Korsakhoff will begin training at the Curtiss school and will take the boats to Russia with him. He said that upon his return he will make a 2,500-mile flight along the River Volga, stopping at the army posts on the route and giving demonstrations. Upon the performance of the boats will depend the placing of a government order for twelve or more machines.

Word was received from Hammondsport that Glenn H. Curtiss will go to Washington to consult with the hydrographic bureau in regard to a transatlantic flight. He will gather statistics concerning the weather conditions off the coast of Newfoundland, and will solicit the bureau's advice as to which is the most favorable month for the flight.

Orville Wright slipped quietly into New York recently and spent the day attending to personal matters. When seen at the Manhattan Hotel he said he had nothing to make public about the aëroplane royalty situation.

Swim in Hobble Skirts, Too.

Attired in ordinary street clothes, fifty University of Illinois girls participated in a novel swimming contest.

The purpose of the race was to train the girls to swim in their clothes in order to be able to overcome this handicap in case of an emergency. As soon as they plunged into the water they were permitted to remove as much clothing as possible without interfering with their swimming. Hobble skirts were not barred.

His Dying Horse a Hoodoo.

When a valuable horse belonging to Lewis Cooper, of Middletown, N. Y., became ill and was unable to stand on its feet, its owner entered the stall carrying a crowbar, which he meant to use in helping the horse arise. But the bar slipped up and broke Cooper's jaw. The horse died soon afterward.

No Rouge for Mill Girls.

Frank E. Guttridge, superintendent of the lace mill of the Patchogue (L. I.) Manufacturing Company, has issued an order barring paint and powder from the faces of the young girl operatives of the mill.

"Wash your faces or lose your jobs," is the order.

"The girls can paint and powder all they please outside the mill, but I won't stand for helps to beauty during working hours," said Mr. Guttridge. He found two young women who had failed to obey his order and sent them home with word to wash their faces or look for new places.

Nurse Wins Medal for Saving Patient's Life.

The twelfth woman to receive one of the medals offered by Congress to "persons who shall endanger their own lives in saving, or endeavoring to save, lives from perils of the sea," is Miss Anna Olsen, a nurse, at the Ellis Island Immigrant Station Hospital, at New York City.

Only two of the twelve women have received gold medals, which are given for extraordinary daring, while the other ten, including Miss Olsen were given silver medals.

Miss Olsen saved the life of Martha Nevik, an alien, under her care, who escaped and plunged into the sea. Although she can barely swim, Miss Olsen plunged into the water without waiting to take off any clothing, and managed to keep the woman above water until help arrived.

Museum Gets Lincoln's Hair.

According to the will of General James Wilson, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, will receive a bloodstained lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair, a ring which contains hair from the heads of Washington, Wellington, Napoleon, Grant, and Lincoln, Washington's sleeve links, and many other historical mementos.

United States to Build Big Railroad System.

For the first time in his history Uncle Sam is going into the business of building a big railroad system. This is the result of the passage of the Alaska railroad bill, which has just been signed by President Wilson.

Here are the essential provisions of the bill:

The president is given practically all power to do anything necessary to bring into existence a completely equipped railroad a thousand miles long and not to cost more than $35,000,000. He is also permitted to buy at physical valuation any line or lines of railroad now in Alaska, but if he does so, this is to be included in the maximum 1,000 miles limitation.

The road is to be built from the south coast of Alaska to navigable waters in the interior, and also to tap one or more coal fields. The president himself must decide what will be the ocean terminus and at what point it will connect with the river transportation in the interior. The road will connect with either the Yukon, the Tanana, or the Koskoquim, and the seaport which will be selected will be either Valdez, Seward, or Katalla. Before determining these questions the president will undoubtedly appoint a commission of expert engineers from civil life and the army or navy to make investigation. One million dollars is provided with which to start work. The Panama equipment is made available when no longer needed at Panama.

The president is authorized to withdraw lands for town sites and also to reserve any such lands in Alaska "as are or may be useful for furnishing materials for construction and for stations, terminals, docks, and for other purposes." This is an important provision, as it will enable him to reserve forest, mineral, or any other lands

which he "deems necessary and desirable" for construction and operation of the railroad.

The president is given the option either to operate or lease the system after it is completed. If leased to private parties, the term shall not run for a period of more than twenty years, and if leased, the interstate commerce commission is to have jurisdiction over it. But, if the president determines on government operation, the control of the road, including rates, et cetera, is left entirely in his hands.

The construction of this road foreshadows the creation of a government-owned line of steamships connecting with it in order to secure its benefits to the citizens of the United States, and particularly to those on the Pacific coast. It will also make necessary the development of the coal mines, and should eventually break the Coal Trust's high prices on the Pacific coast.

Roosevelt is Safe in Brazil.

Theodore Roosevelt was not in that part of his exploring expedition wrecked in the rapids of an uncharted river in the interior of Brazil, according to dispatches.

Mrs. Anthony Fiala, who lives in Brooklyn, was informed that a dispatch had been received from her husband, stating that Mr. Roosevelt was not in the wrecked division of the party. This dispatch also stated that no one was injured, but that two boats were lost, with all the party's baggage.

Minor Leagues Hard Hit by New Federals.

Life for the manager of an American Association team is not a bed of roses this year. Every leader has been compelled to work hard all day to keep his players in condition, and to sleep with one eye open at night to prevent Federal League scouts from luring his best players away.

The Federal League has hurt the American Association more than any other baseball organization, and fears are entertained that it will cripple the teams further.

It has been shown that the Federal League has expended $2,560,000 for grounds and stands alone, so the minor-league club owners see no immediate hope that the new league will die.

Use Wires to Cut Down Trees.

A wire heated with an electric current has often been used to saw through large trees or rather to burn its way through. A later and neater method of felling a tree is to move a fine wire back and forth with great rapidity by an electric motor so that the wire, heated by friction, burns a narrow cut through the tree.

The cut is cleaner than a saw cut, and the method permits the cutting to be done below the surface of the earth so that no stump is left. A central power plant could be located in a forest to supply current for the operation, and foresters in the future may thus dispense with sawing.

Some Horse Deal.

Joe Miller, of Boston, made the best deal of his career when he purchased a horse and wagon for 35 cents and found a half dollar in the outfit. He bought them from a woman in Bridgewater, who admitted that the horse was blind in one eye and lame, but worth $1 at that.

Later he invested $5 for grain, and then appeared on the streets with his horse and wagon, the steed still blind in one eye, but the lameness gone. Joe agreed that he has the smartest outfit of any of the ragmen who have money enough to support a horse.

Fine or Jail for Profanity.

Grafton S. Kenyon, State Rhode Island representative from South Kingston, is father of a bill which makes it a misdemeanor to use profane and indecent language toward women and minor employees. A fine of $20 or imprisonment for ten days is the penalty proposed in the bill, which has been introduced in the House.

Amundsen May Quit.

The Christiania correspondent of the London *Times* says that Captain Roald Amundsen announces that his polar expedition depends upon his receiving a further government grant toward his expenses. Altogether $200,000 will be required.

Amundsen is prepared to find a considerable sum himself, but will give up the expedition if the necessary amount cannot be raised.

Ball Players Bow to Superstition.

While professional baseball and its players have improved during the past fifteen years until now it is considered the cleanest of the sports, superstition clings to the game. The fact that the players are no longer the rough, fighting rowdies of old, and that many of them are highly educated has not eradicated the old belief in ill omens.

To the ball player, anything that he thinks tends to make his team lose, or to make him play poorly is a "jinx," and he will do all in his power to avoid it. While many of the players believe in the old superstitions, such as walking under a ladder, sleeping in berth No. 13 of a Pullman car, or reporting for practice on Friday, still baseball, as a rule, has "jinxes" all its own.

The superstitious ball player is a stickler for doing a thing in the same way day after day and time after time so long as good luck is with him. If he walks to the ball park by a certain route and hits well that day, he will insist on going the same way each time until luck changes. If he walks to the plate immediately after taking a drink of water and gets a hit, he will take a drink just before his time at bat ever after if his good fortune continues.

Many ball players when they are "going good"—hitting and fielding well—will not change their stockings so long as they are successful, and many pitchers observe the same rule regarding their shirts, when they are having a winning streak.

Jimmie Scheckard, formerly with the Chicago Cubs, but this year manager of the Cleveland American Association team, is a believer in signs and omens. He always goes to bat in a certain way. The same holds true of his manner of walking to and from the clubhouse before and after a game. He always picks some one who looks lucky to associate with while going to and from the ball park.

Frank Chance, manager of the New York Americans, is considered the most superstitious leader in the major leagues. The worst thing he can conceive is to see the score board during a game. If he accidentally sees the score luck is sure to change. He has had score boards

in two ball parks moved so that he could not see them from his bench.

Clark Griffith, manager of the Washington Americans, is said to be the least superstitious of the managers, yet if he dreams that a pitcher is batted hard that pitcher is kept out of the game for a few days. He says he isn't superstitious, but he can't afford to take chances.

Most every ball player is superstitious about barrels and hay. A load of empty barrels is good luck, a load of barrels filled with anything is unlucky, a load of loose hay is lucky, and a load of baled hay is unlucky.

The worst luck in the world follows the sight of a cross-eyed person, according to the ball players. However, this "jinx" may be broken by spitting in your hat immediately. In procuring bat boys to carry the clubs from the home plate back to the bench and to keep them neatly piled in order, baseball managers, as a rule, pick out the worst-looking youth to be found. He is retained so long as things go well, but when the time arrives that the team hits a slump, another homely boy is taken on.

Frank Isbell, who played with the Chicago White Sox for many years, but is manager of the Des Moines Club, of the Western League now, thinks bald-headed negroes are lucky. When he was manager of the Wichita Western League team, he passed a negro fan into each game. In the tight places during the game he would rush over to the bleacher fence and rub the bald pate of the negro.

Ball players also believe that if three persons or more light cigarettes or pipes from the same match, that bad luck will follow. They also object to being met at a depot by a band, declaring the team will slump early. This, of course, does not apply when the team has already had a losing streak.

Formerly it was considered bad luck of the worst sort to have one's picture taken before a game, but this superstition has disappeared except in a few minor leagues. Newspapers, who have demanded photographs of players, have caused this change, the vanity of the player overbalancing his fears of the "jinx."

Married Aboard Street Car.

With the conductor and the motorman as attendants Miss Rae Aurora Archer, of Mineral Wells, and Harry Taylor Butcher, of Rockport, were married on board a street car, at Parkersburg, W. Va., by the Reverend Arthur Hank.

The marriage was to have taken place at the home of the bride, but the pastor failed to appear, so the couple came to Parkersburg. The bridegroom called up the Reverend Mr. Hank, and agreed to meet him at the end of the street-car line for the ceremony.

Four Saved by Boy, Mother Urging Him.

Fred Schepper, the twelve-year-old son of Frank Schepper, a bayman, called his mother to the window of their home in the fishing settlement in Sands Bay Inlet, L. I., recently, to see a launch that was in trouble half a mile out on Jamaica Bay.

Evidently, the boat's engine was "dead" and the launch was being rolled about by big swells, while four men worked desperately to keep it head on to the seas. Every few seconds it dropped out of sight behind big waves and reappeared without gaining any headway.

Running out of the house, Fred and his mother heard shouts and then saw the launch heel over under a big wave and come up a few seconds later bottom side up, with four men struggling to grip the keel. Mrs. Schepper immediately took charge.

"You'll have to get out the boat and go after them, Fred," she said. "They're not more than half a mile out, and by the time we could call help they would be drowned."

Mrs. Schepper ran with her son to the water's edge, where he jumped into a small, flat-bottomed rowboat, and took the oars, while his mother cast it off from its moorings.

Fred had been out with his father hundreds of times, and in spite of his few years and small size could handle the oars with some skill. His tiny craft was soon out among the big waves. Mrs. Schepper stood on shore watching him and shouting encouragement.

"You can make it, Fred!" she cried. "There's four of them hanging on."

In a few minutes the boat was rolling up and down thirty-foot swells with a lean, wiry youngster tugging at the oars and heading for the capsized launch. It was getting dark and the men were too busy fighting for their lives to see the rowboat coming toward them. The youngster was within a few yards of them before they heard him shouting. Their cries guided him to the side of the launch.

When within a few feet of the wreck a man whom the boy recognized as a bayman let go of the keel and swam to the rowboat. While the small boy at the oars kept the boat headed against the seas, the first man assisted the other three, who were exhausted, into the boat.

Then, with the rowboat heavily overloaded, they had a perilous trip to the shore. The bayman wanted to row, but Fred said that he was not tired, and that he understood the boat better than any one else. So the four men sat still and watched while the boy fought hard with the oars, and the boat crept slowly back toward the fishing settlement.

It was nearly half an hour later that the boat came alongside the small pier in front of their house. Mr. Schepper, who had returned while the boy was out with the boat, was waiting there with his wife. The whole party went to Schepper's home and dried before his fire, while Mrs. Schepper got them coffee.

Saloons Go; Banquet is Held.

In appreciation of their voting out saloons, at Fisher, Minn., the women of the village gave a banquet to the voters. About 100 men were present.

For thirty years—or ever since the village was established—saloons have been allowed to operate, the question never having been submitted to an election. Recently John Ketten, the village blacksmith, circulated a petition asking that the question be submitted, and at the election no license carried by a vote of 56 to 15.

Waits Twenty Years for Girl; Forgotten.

Twenty years ago a girl promised to await the return of Joseph Hart, her lover, who, after having been refused the consent of her father because he was not rich, decided to go West. Hart kept working for twenty years and became rich. He returned to Pittsburgh with but one thought—to marry his childhood sweetheart. He visited the Point district, where the two had lived, and learned the girl had married just one year after he left home.

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